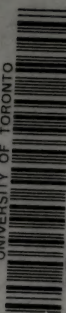


THE OLIGARCHY *f* VENICE

by *George B. McClellan*

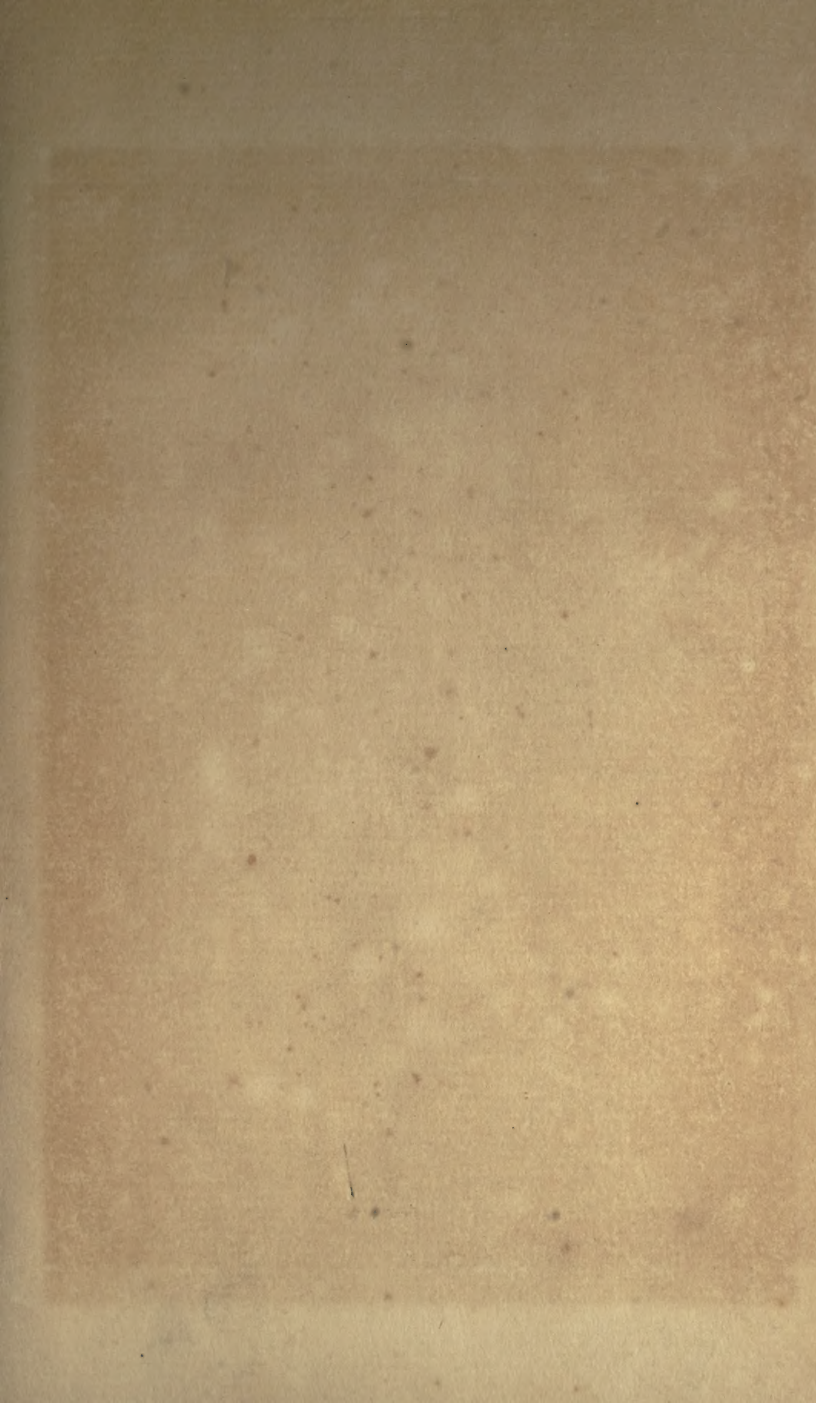


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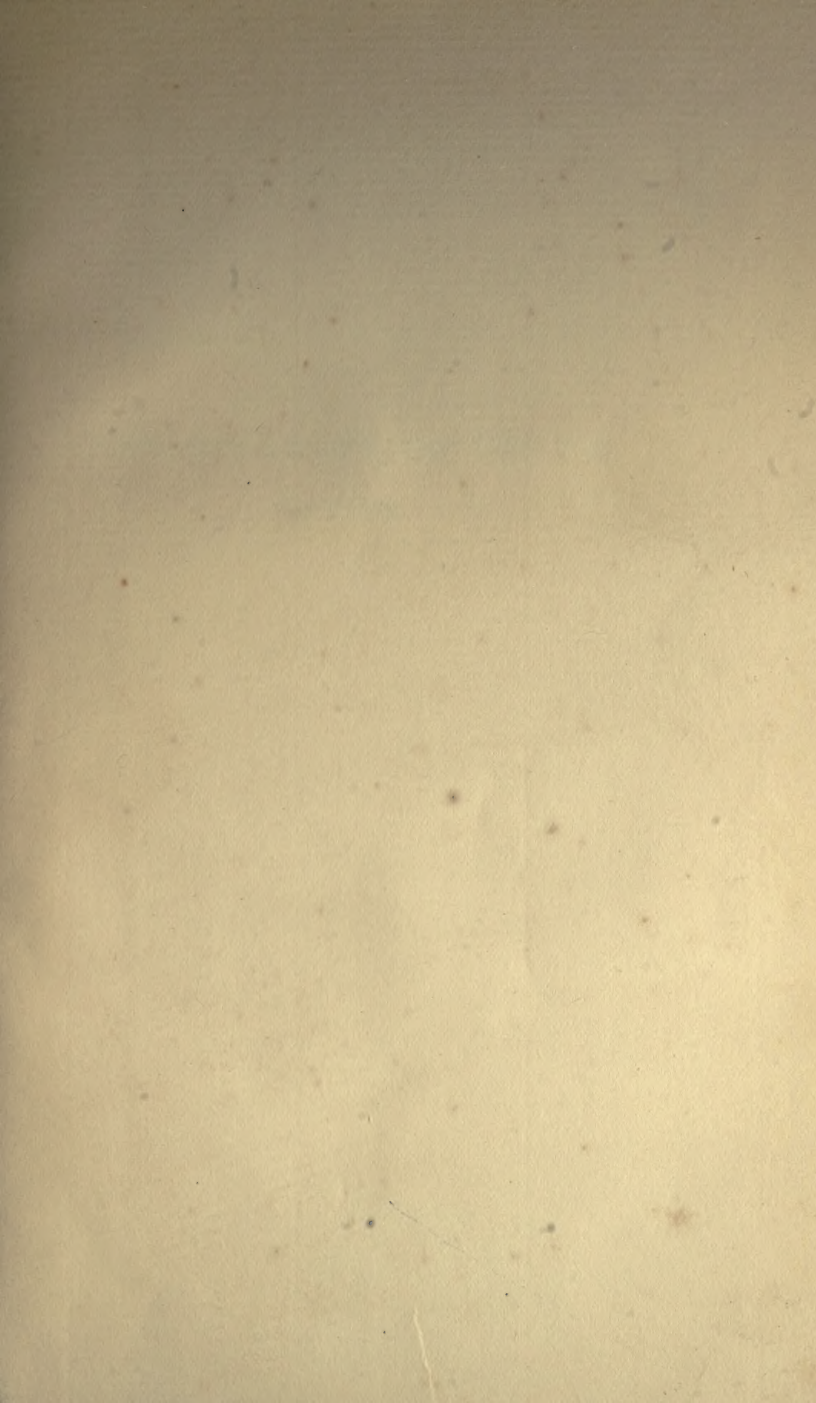



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THE OLIGARCHY OF VENICE

An Essay

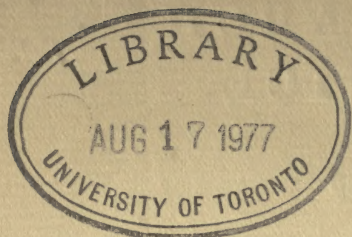
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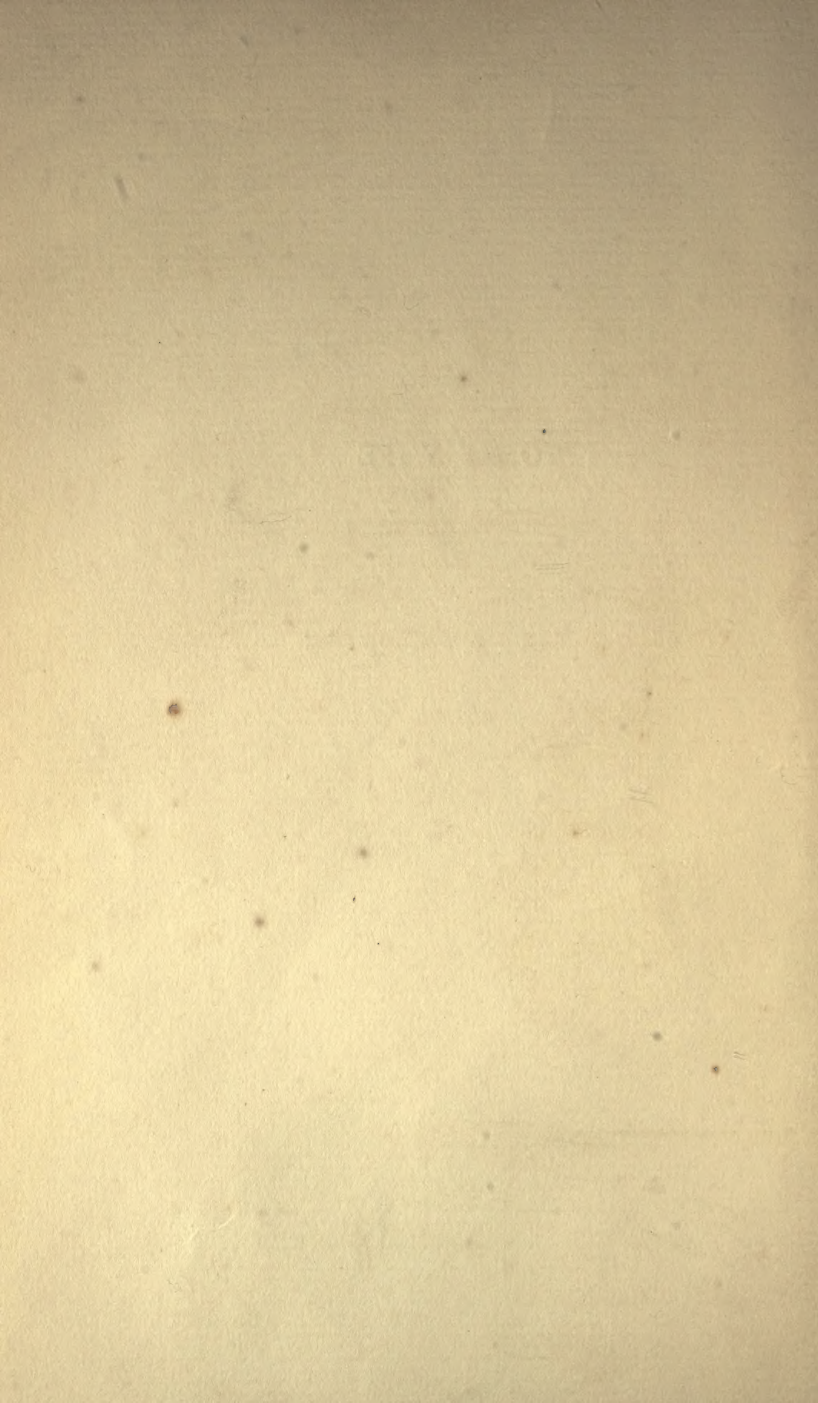
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TO MY WIFE



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THE OLIGARCHY OF VENICE

CHAPTER I

VENICE

So much has been written about Venice, so much that is true, so much that is false, so much fiction under the guise of history and history under the guise of fiction, so much poetry in prose and prose in poetry, that in sorting the vast amount of available material, it is a matter of no little difficulty to separate the grain from the chaff.

For the story of the beginning of Venice, we must depend upon the early chroniclers, foremost among whom stands John the Deacon.¹ As they were contemporaneous, or nearly so, with the events which they describe, we must accept their word as law, only rejecting it when some outside authority confutes them. The chronicles of Andrea Dan-

¹ He was formerly known as John Sagornino, but quite recently he has been deprived of his surname.

dolo¹ bring the story onward to the beginning of his reign as doge, in 1343, and are inestimably valuable, because of the sources of information to which he had access. The official historians of the republic² are limited in value from the necessity under which they found themselves of writing nothing offensive to an all-seeing and paternal oligarchy. Of later historians scarcely any avoided being influenced by the prejudice of nationality, or the mixed condition of European politics. Moreover, it is only recently that history has begun to be an exact science. Misstatements of fact, originally made for political or religious reasons, have by constant repetition become incorporated as part of Venetian history. So late historians as the Abbé Laugier,³ writing in the eighteenth century, and Daru,⁴ at the beginning of the nineteenth, must be accepted with the greatest caution. Daru's open hostility to the Church, his constant

¹ Printed in Muratori, *Rer. Ital. Scrip.* vol. xii.

² Sabellico, 1487, Bembo, 1551, Paruta, 1605, Morosini, 1623, Nani, 1680, Giustiniani, 1534.

³ *Histoire de la République de Venise*, par l'abbé Laugier, Paris, 1759, 12 vols.

⁴ *Histoire de Venise*, par le Comte P. Daru, Paris, 1853, 7 vols.

effort, as a special pleader, to place her in the wrong whenever possible, makes his delightful history of doubtful value.

It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that Romanin published the first complete, accurate, and unprejudiced history of the republic that had yet appeared.¹ The ten volumes of this work entitle their author to rank among the great historians. Of the more recent works on Venetian history that of Hazlitt² is valuable for its fullness of detail, while that of Hodgson³ is accurate and scholarly.

The history of Venice is unlike that of any other nation in that it is a completed whole. Extending over a period of fourteen hundred years, its lines of demarcation are clearly fixed. There was no shading off of Venetian institutions, or of Venetian government, into those of any other state. There was no absorption of her ruling caste into another nationality. She ceased to exist as abruptly

¹ *Storia documentata di Venezia*, di S. Romanin, Venezia, 1853-61, 10 vols.

² *The Venetian Republic*, by W. Carew Hazlitt, London, 1900, 2 vols.

³ *Early History of Venice*, by F. C. Hodgson, New York and London, 1902, 1 vol.

as she began ; she died as she was born, like a conscious, sentient being; and when she passed away, those who had guided her fortunes disappeared from human activity as completely as though the waters of the lagoons had closed over them. And so the history of Venice may be studied from beginning to end as a tale that is told, as a life that has been lived. But for her there was no hope of resurrection, no possibility of a life to come.

There was never anything commonplace in Venice. Her people solved the pettiest problems of every-day life, as they managed the gravest affairs of state, in ways peculiarly their own. She was the product of her time and age, but developed upon individual lines. She was capable of great deeds, and infinite wickedness. Sometimes she was worse than those about her, sometimes better, sometimes carried along with the tide of mediævalism, yet more often swimming against that tide, with a dash and a vigor worthy of the world's best days. And then at last, overcome by the sloth engendered by the forgetfulness of her greatness, she who had defied popes and emperors,

who had laughed at coalitions embracing nearly the whole of Europe, succumbed at the word of Napoleon.

The story of Venice is a great melodrama, divided into tableaux, appealing to the imagination rather than to cold logic. We forget all that has happened between the acts, that while the curtain has been down there has been ceaseless activity behind the scenes. The great events of Venetian history impress themselves upon our minds at the expense of the causes and the results. Yet there is a clearly defined argument running through the whole story, a *leit-motif* that is carried by the orchestra from the overture to the finale, and it is the study of this gradual development of the causes of her greatness and of her undoing, that presents the most fascinating phase of Venetian history.

The condition of anarchy into which Europe had been thrown by the extinction of the Roman Empire by the barbarians who swept across from Asia gave place in time to the feudal system. The portable spoils of a successful barbaric horde were divided among its members, in accordance with their power or rank. When the barbarians set-

tled in the country of their conquest, the division of the lands presented a different problem.

The chief had acquired his preëminence, either because of inheritance joined to personal fitness, or because of individual qualities alone. His power was derived directly from the army, upon whose efficiency he depended for very existence. The work of conquest required time, and the settlements among the conquered were merely armed camps pitched, for a greater or lesser period, between campaigns. The division of the lands was the reward of military service, and, in view of the constantly recurring calls to arms, could only be granted by the chief in return for military aid when required. Feudal tenures were in the nature of retaining-fees, for the services of the grantees.

As the theory of divine right grew, the crown, for services of one kind or another, all originally military in their nature, granted its lands in feoff to its subjects, who in turn regranted feoffs, in the same way, to lower subjects of the crown.

The feudal system was based upon the theory that the crown possessed lands to

grant, and that the grantee controlled military resources with which to make return.

The inevitable result of the system was that the original grantees of the crown developed immense strength and power.

In a period of great disorder, when the few roads that existed were almost impassable, and when rapid communication was impossible, the administration of a state of any size presented almost insuperable difficulties. The crown soon found itself in the anomalous and embarrassing position of ruling nominally by divine right, really by the sufferance of its nobles ; of granting feoffs to the lords temporal of the kingdom, which were in most cases as absolute, and in many cases more secure, than the tenure of the crown itself.

A community of interest soon developed among the nobles, having for its object their independence in all but name, the consolidation of their power, and the reduction of the crown to a position of mere dependence upon them.

Threatened with loss of prerogative and power, the crown turned to the only ally available, and, by playing the people against

their immediate masters, was able to regain its lost prestige. It thus came about that under the feudal system absolute monarchy became the champion of the people.

As time went on the power of the crown and the people combined became great enough to destroy the feudal system. As the strength of the crown grew, that of the nobles decreased. At length, when the rule of this strange partnership became undisputed, the people awoke to a realization of their power, and popular government came into being.

In Italy the history of feudalism was somewhat different. Because of the barrier of the Alps, the emperors were obliged to concede a latitude and independence to the great Italian feudatories which they declined to tolerate nearer home. The Italian cities had preserved the spirit of municipal autonomy which they had inherited from the days of the Roman Empire. Before the middle of the twelfth century, almost every city of Italy had shaken itself free from the feudal system. They ceased to be mere appanages of the feoff of some neighboring noble, and early became self-governing communities. But

the loss of their freedom was merely a question of time, and the histories of all the mainland cities are very similar. Petty republics at first, the task of maintaining their independence from the neighboring nobles soon proved beyond their powers. Some one noble was called upon to help them protect their liberty. After saving them for the moment, sometimes suddenly, sometimes gradually, sometimes with their consent, more often without it, the protector invariably ended by acquiring absolute power, and establishing a tyranny. The Visconti in Milan, Eccelino and the Scaligers in Verona, the Este in Ferrara, and later the Medici in Florence and the Carraresi in Padua all followed the same general course.

The weaker despots were in turn absorbed by the stronger, and these fought the battle of the survival of the fittest, until all alike gave way before the new barbaric invasion from Spain, France, and Germany in the sixteenth century.

The evolution of the scheme of government in Venice was along lines distinctly her own. Because of her situation in the lagoons, she was as much cut off from the influence

of the feudal system as though a thousand leagues of ocean had separated her from the shore. She had no territory upon the mainland, and no rights nor claims resulting from such possessions. Having neither lands to grant nor to be granted, she was absolutely outside the dominant system of Europe.

In her early history her sole possession was the right to exploit the open sea and to derive what wealth she could from fishing and from petty trade. As her wealth increased, and as her citizens acquired property in Italy and the colonies, she still preserved her aloofness from feudalism. Any rights or privileges possessed abroad by her citizens gave them no influence at home, except that derived from riches.¹

With no lands to inherit, a landed aristocracy was an impossibility. Being of necessity a commercial state, the only aristocracy she could develop was that of wealth. And it is this fact which in great measure explains the peculiar form of her evolution.

The tendency of a landed aristocracy is toward the concentration of possession by inheritance, marriage, and conquest. The

¹ Daru, i. 372.

tendency of a commercial class is, on the other hand, toward the diffusion of wealth. Opportunities for the acquisition of wealth are open to a greater number, as are also the possibilities of loss. While a commercial class inclines to develop a community of interests, and to separate itself from the people as a whole, it is inevitably larger than a land-owning aristocracy, for the very good reason that the possibilities for the acquisition of possessions are in the one case unlimited, in the other restricted by the amount of available territory.

The early settlers of Venice undoubtedly brought with them from the mainland the same class feelings and distinctions that had existed in their former homes.¹ When the first leveling fear of the barbarian had disappeared, the dominant class was bound to assert itself. In the territory surrounding the lagoon the class had developed, as had the aristocracy in every other part of Italy. It had possessed the lands, and therefore the power to rule. Deprived of its possessions, it brought to Venice nothing but a sentiment and a tradition, — the sentiment of loyalty felt by the

¹ Romanin, viii. 322.

people for their masters and the tradition of holding in its grasp the reins of government. But in an active, vigorous young state, like Venice, sentiment and tradition were of themselves insufficient props to sustain a permanent aristocracy.

In a community where there was at first an almost absolute equality of poverty, the line of class cleavage necessarily divided the inhabitants in accordance with their success in the race for riches that immediately began. In this race the ruling class possessed the inestimable advantage over its fellows of the habit of leadership and initiative, and the control, through the clergy, of what little scholarship the times could boast.

The first aristocracy of Venice was a small and exclusive body, narrow in its aims, and jealous of its power. In a small community, such as early Venice was, it was a comparatively easy matter for it to acquire the wealth that was essential to its existence. But in a commercial state, it was powerless to concentrate in its own members all the riches of the country. From the very beginning members of the middle class, and even plebeians, acquired wealth by trade, and disputed the

privileges of the patricians. As the new men became more numerous, they became more insistent, so that the old order, in self-defense, allied itself with the people, long before such a coalition had been dreamed of elsewhere. The republican government under the early doges may not have been democratic according to modern ideas, but inasmuch as the doge was dependent upon the assembly of the whole people for power, and as the assembly unquestionably legislated on all important matters, it was far nearer popular government than any which Europe could show for a considerable time afterwards.

Popular government in the other countries of Europe required centuries for development, Venice practically began her history as a state with popular institutions. The few ruling families reserved for their own members the dignity of the crown, and kept in their hands the exploitation of its prerogative. But the people possessed the power of guiding the policy of their ruler, and the right to choose and to depose him,—a power and a right they did not hesitate to use. In other countries of Europe the evolution of government was from above, downward,—

power at first concentrated in the hands of the few gradually passing to those of the many, — in Venice the process was exactly reversed.

While the alliance of crown and people had been growing stronger, the trend being constantly toward an hereditary popular monarchy, a commercial aristocracy was at the same time developing by the side of the ruling class. This new aristocracy, which was founded exclusively upon wealth derived from trade, without the traditions which were the monopoly of the old order, was excluded from the leadership in government, and only permitted to follow by the jealous tolerance of its betters.

Had conditions in the beginning permitted Venice to expand inland, she might perhaps in time have given Europe the first example of an hereditary constitutional monarchy. Being restricted in her development to the sea, she was forced to reverse her growth.

The new aristocracy was soon strong enough to assert itself, and with the first *coup d'état* of Venetian history, the old aristocracy of sentiment and tradition disap-

peared forever. The abolition of the principle of association and heredity in the selection of the doges checked the rapidly increasing tendency toward an hereditary monarchy, and absorbed into the new ruling class the members of the old order, as a small and unimportant part of the commercial aristocracy.

The new order, which with Flabianico assumed the direction of affairs, was entirely composed of men engaged in the same occupation, and having a single ambition and a single purpose. There were no feudal seigneurs in the Venetian aristocracy, no land-owners, no rulers of castles or of towns, no soldiers. All were merchants engaged in the pursuit of wealth, through commerce. For them the acquisition of wealth was the sole and necessary path to eminence and power. For them wealth and power and wealth and success became synonymous. They appreciated the fact that the prosperity of the individual merchant depended upon the welfare of the commercial class as a whole; and that for the benefit of the class everything else must be subordinated.

As wealth increased, class feeling became

MARIST FATHERS
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stronger; influenced not only by the wish to retain what had already been acquired, but by the desire to continue to exploit the unlimited field of possibility throughout the world.

The second *coup d'état* deprived the people of the right to elect the doge, and lodged that power in the hands of the Great Council—in other words, in the hands of the dominant merchant class; and established the power of the oligarchy of wealth which controlled the state.

The third and last *coup d'état*, by closing the Great Council, made it impossible for any outsider to become a member of the aristocracy, except by the consent of the aristocracy itself. The aristocracy of Venice, by these successive steps, became a great trade-guild, a commercial monopoly or trust, from which all outsiders were rigorously excluded. Controlling the government of the republic, holding practically all the wealth of the state, competition against it, in Venice at least, was impossible.

The history of Venice from the time of Flabianico is the history of its ruling class. For the members of the class, class feeling

and class interests took the place of love of country. Members of the class showed, throughout its history, great unselfishness and devotion; but the virtues that we are prone to ascribe to patriotism were, in Venice, inspired by loyalty to the oligarchy. Venice was the oligarchy, and the oligarchy was Venice. They were inseparably welded together; the story of one is the story of both.

The inverse evolution of Venice was accomplished gradually, as it required time for the oligarchy to attain its full growth. The people were at first supreme; their power was limited little by little, the aristocracy becoming more and more important, until at the end the evolution was completed suddenly, the people were deprived of all power, and the oligarchy ruled omnipotent.

The life of the oligarchy, like that of any monopoly, depended upon two factors; first, sound business management, second, favorable natural conditions. Throughout the history of the republic, until nearly the end, the devotion of the ruling class to what it conceived to be its own interests never wavered and never flagged. Looking back through

the vista of the centuries it is easy to detect the mistakes that were made. But if the men in control guided Venice to her destruction, they were at least acting in what they thought to be her best interests. Toward the close she was destined to have at the helm men without the statesmanship of their predecessors.

Perhaps the conquest of Constantinople was unavoidable, but the policy of territorial expansion upon which Venice embarked, under the lead of Francesco Foscari, was an inexcusable blunder, which could only result in her eventual undoing. When to the mistakes of mismanagement was added the loss of her natural monopoly, by the discovery of the Cape route and of America, the ruin of Venice was inevitable.

The very wealth upon which her greatness was founded became the chief source of her weakness. The luxury of the Renaissance was felt nowhere more directly than in Venice. The merchant princes of the republic, investing their riches in lands in Italy and the colonies, were content to live without exertion upon its proceeds, and to bring up their sons to lives of idleness and dissipation. With luxury came the extremes of wealth

and poverty. A class of pauper nobles was developed,¹ too proud or indolent to work, with no means of livelihood but the sale of their votes in the Great Council.

The last century of the history of Venice is a story of rottenness and corruption. The oligarchy had lost its pride and its honor; it was demoralized and disorganized. That Venice did not disappear earlier from the map of Europe was because it was worth no one's while to blot her out.

¹ Called Barnabotti, from the parish of S. Barnabà, where most of them lived.

CHAPTER II

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE REPUBLIC

THE date of the arrival of the Veneti in Italy, where they probably found and displaced earlier inhabitants, is as uncertain as is the origin of the people themselves. Authorities differ as to whether they were a wandering tribe of Slavs, whether they were Gallic, or whether they came from Paphlagonia.¹ When this migration may have taken place is purely conjectural. It is certain, however, that the city of Padua is of great antiquity, and that Aquileia was a place of much importance as early as the second century before our era. During the reign of Augustus a large population surrounded the marshy lagoon formed by the sand-bars, or lidi, thrown up by the action of the Po and the Adige, and extending with but little interruption from Ravenna on the south to Aquileia, and its port Grado, on the north.

¹ Romanin, i. 7; Daru, i. 37; Hodgson, 7.

There had probably been a few scattered fishermen living on the islands of the lagoon from the time of the earliest settlement of the mainland, but it was not until the invasion of Attila, in 452 A.D., that some thousands of refugees sought, in the shallows, temporary protection from the Huns. It is more than a mere figure of speech, therefore, to say that Attila founded Venice.¹

The danger disappeared, and while many of the refugees returned to their homes to rebuild the cities that had been destroyed by the Scourge of God, large numbers remained.² Paduans on Rivo Alto, and Malamocco, peasants of Belluno and Feltre at Heraclea, people of Oderzo and Asolo at Jesolo, and of Altinum at Torcello, Murano, and Burano, having found their new homes preferable to those they had deserted, established themselves permanently.

The earliest chronicles of the settlement of the lagoon speak of the people of each village as governed by tribunes, annually elected by the people themselves. The only government the people knew was that of the

¹ Hodgson, 17; Hazlitt, i. xx, and Brown, 5.

² Romanin, i. 30.

empire, and the election of tribunes, dependent upon the central government at Ravenna, was but a survival of the old municipal life of Rome.¹ It was to these tribunes that Cassiodorus, prætorian prefect under Theodoric, addressed the somewhat grandiloquent letter, that has been so much quoted.²

In 568, Alboin and his Lombard hordes crossed the Alps into Italy. Once more the inhabitants of Venetia felt the horrors of barbaric invasion. Again the people of the mainland cities took refuge in the marshes. After the tide of invasion had receded, many returned, but more remained than when Attila had put the people to fire and sword.

It is from the time of Alboin that the real foundation of Venice may be dated.³ Attila had spared little of the once important city of Aquileia, but what he had left Alboin destroyed. Dandolo tells, however, of two churches founded by the eunuch Narses, while still exarch, or about 565 A. D., and of a church built about the same time by Paduans settled in the lagoon.⁴ Paulus, patriarch

¹ Hodgson, 33.

² M. A. Cassiodori, *Opera Omnia*, Rotomagi, 1679, lib. 12, ep. 24, tom. i. 198.

³ And. Dandolo, *Apud Muratori*, xii. 94 *et seq.* ⁴ *Ib.* 92.

of Aquileia, flying before the conqueror, took refuge, with the relics of his church, at Grado, the seaport of the city, where he remained, continuing to call himself patriarch of New Aquileia.

The schism of the Three Chapters¹ produced a rival at the older city, who flourished until 715, when Pope Gregory II. granted the pallium to both bishops. After that date the patriarch of New Aquileia took his title from Grado, where he lived, and was subject to the Eastern emperor, while the patriarch of Aquileia lived at Cormons and afterwards at Cividale, and was subject to the Lombard king.

As the people of the infant republic were of all classes of the communities from which they had come, the formation of an aristocracy, in such an age, was a mere question of time. It was a necessary consequence that the tribunal authority should ere long fall into the hands of certain families, and, as it happened, be misused in the interests of the few and against the many. The government was weak, and authority was divided.

¹ So called from the anathemas pronounced by the emperor Justinian in 543 against the writings of three bishops, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret and Ibas of Edessa, as being infected with Nestorianism. Hodgson, 44.

Conditions on the mainland were far from reassuring, and all classes felt the need of a closer union, and a stronger government with which to defend the state. A general assembly of the people was held at Heraclea in 697, when, under the leadership of Cristoforo, the patriarch of Grado, Paoluccio Anafesto of Heraclea was elected doge, or duke, of the little confederacy.¹ The election of her first doge marks the first step in the evolution of the life of Venice. She was still a very weak and petty state, but she had begun to develop a national spirit and a unity of wants and purposes.

The jealousy of the tribunal families for each other, their constant quarrels, and their oppression of the people, caused the latter to assert themselves, and, aided by the fear of foreign enemies entertained by all alike, to anticipate by centuries the evolution of the northern races in taking refuge from the nobles under the might of a crown.

The early doges were, like their predecessors, the tribunes, subject to the Byzantine power. It has even been suggested that they were as much Byzantine officers as were the

¹ And. Dandolo, *Apud Muratori*, xii. 127.

dukes of Rome and Naples,¹ and it seems certain that the electoral assembly of Heraclea only imitated the larger cities of Rome, Genoa, and Naples, in electing for life a doge to rule their destinies.² Dependence on the empire did not preclude a large measure of local self-government, amounting actually, if not nominally, to independence. While nominal as well as actual independence came in time, the closest relations existed between Venice and Constantinople until the fall of the empire.

Within the confederacy the power of the early doges, while not clearly defined, was really supreme. The doge was answerable only to the Arengo, or popular assembly, which consisted of every male adult in the republic who chose to attend, and was very similar to the old Saxon Folk-Mote, or the New England Town-Meeting of our own day.

At first the tribunes survived under the authority of the doge in a subordinate magisterial capacity.³ As the power of the latter increased, the authority of the tribunes

¹ Finlay, quoted by Hodgson, note 3, 62.

² Romanin, i. 93.

³ Romanin, i. 93.

was restricted, and they finally disappear from history at the beginning of the ninth century.¹ The military authority of the state was lodged in an annually elected master of the soldiers, who was subordinate to the doge.²

Little is known of the administrations of the first three doges. The quarrels of the nobles and their followers continued to divide the state, until in 737 the third doge, Orso, the Hypatus, was killed in a petty civil war between Heraclea and Jesolo. Conditions having reached a stage bordering on anarchy, the Byzantine government interfered,³ and suspended the ducal authority for five years, conferring the supreme power upon the master of the soldiers. In 742, with the election of Deodato, the son of the doge Orso, the ducal office was revived, destined in name at least to continue until the fall of the republic, and the seat of government was removed from Heraclea to Malamocco.

During the first three hundred and fifty years of her history Venice was occupied in consolidating herself. Internal strife and

¹ Hodgson, 79.

² Romanin, i. 97.

³ Gfrörer, quoted by Hodgson, 135.

bloodshed marked her growth, civil wars succeeded one another with great frequency. Doges were murdered or deposed, blinded or tonsured, restored and acclaimed, as their friends or enemies gained the upper hand. Yet during this long period, violent as her inhabitants may have been, they were no more so than were every other young people of Europe during their first years. The Venetians were, moreover, during their early days, a free people, who had thrown off the yoke of the nobles at the outset, and had begun their inverse evolution uninfluenced by the feudal system of their neighbors.¹

In 808 the Byzantine emperor Nicephorus induced Venice to support him in an attack on Comacchio, held by the forces of Charlemagne. The attack was repulsed, and Charlemagne sent his son Pepin with an army to invade Dalmatia. Before doing so he attempted to secure the help of Venice in his undertaking. His advances were promptly declined by the republic, and he forthwith determined to turn his Dalmatian army against her.

Venice prepared to defend herself, and

¹ Romanin, i. 193.

awaited the worst. Fortunately for her, Pepin underestimated the strength of her position. The shallows of the lagoon prevented the effective use of his fleet, and after a repulse at Albiola, he concluded to make peace. Tradition exaggerates the battle of Albiola into a splendid victory by the Venetians over the might of Charlemagne. History, however, reduces it to the dimensions of a skirmish, in which Pepin was checked but by no means defeated. By the terms of the peace, Pepin recognized the ancient commercial privileges of Venice, and restored her territory, which he had occupied, while the republic agreed to pay, and continued long afterwards to pay, an annual tribute to her enemy.¹

The check given to Pepin was of far more importance to the development of Venice than the extent of the so-called victory would imply. Had the Frankish army conquered the confederacy, its future could at best have been little more than that of a provincial town of the Empire. Venice had received a severe lesson, and at once profited by it. The capital at Malamocco, situated on a sand-bar

¹ Romanin, i. 147.

lying between the lagoon and the open sea, had proved too vulnerable to attack for the security of the state. The first official act of the republic after the conclusion of the peace¹ was the removal of the seat of government to Rivo Alto, a group of islands in the centre of the lagoon, about equidistant between the mainland and the sea. And so the permanent capital was established.² Malamocco was destroyed, and the site of Heraclia has been forgotten; but Rivo Alto exists as the Venice that we know to-day.

It was the consequence of her geographical position that Venice, from the first, should have engaged in commerce. The lagoon was a natural highway between Ravenna and Altinum, while the Po and Adige, with their tributaries, brought her into direct communication with almost the entire north of Italy. She was at one extremity of the easiest route into Germany, and but a short distance from the Brenner, the most traveled pass over the eastern Alps. Pavia was the great distributing-point of northern Italy, and to this metropolis Venice had a quick waterway up the Po and Ticino. As early

¹ A. D. 813.

² Romanin, i. 150.

as the beginning of the fifth century, Cassiodorus in his letter to the tribunes¹ directs them to provide transport for wine and oil, from Istria to Ravenna, and speaks of the dwellers of the lagoon as a maritime people engaging in many journeys both upon the sea and on the neighboring rivers.

When the cities of the mainland were destroyed by Alboin, Venice inherited a large part of their trade. It was, however, to her close connection with the Byzantine Empire that Venice owed the first growth of her commerce. Constantinople was the centre of the civilized world, — the largest and the richest city of Europe.

Her enormous consumption, not only of necessities but of luxuries, required the services of a merchant fleet proportionate in size to her needs. Her imports coming over the Alps found their way to her by the shortest and cheapest route, through Venice. The carrying-trade with the East was at first in the hands of the Greeks, but after the triumph of the crescent, it gradually fell to the Italians, who, unlike the members of the Eastern Church, had no conscientious scruples

¹ See page 22, *supra*.

against trading with the Moslem. Of this most lucrative trade Venice obtained her full share, and even derived considerable revenue from selling Christian European slaves to the Infidel.¹ That her commerce soon reached large proportions is evident from the fact that at the close of the ninth century Louis II., the emperor, visited Venice for the purpose of discussing with her, as the chief naval power in Italy, the defense of the country against the Saracens and the Normans.²

The chief outlet from Venice being the Adriatic, it was essential to her prosperity that her great highway should be absolutely secure. Upon the opposite shore of Dalmatia there dwelt a race of Croatian pirates, who had constantly harassed Venetian shipping, and had only been appeased by the payment of blackmail. In 998 the doge, Pietro Orseolo II., deeming himself sufficiently strong, refused to pay the annual tribute. The pirates at once renewed hostilities, a Venetian fleet was sent to Dalmatia, and burned the town of Lissa. The pirates in revenge murdered hundreds of the defenseless pea-

¹ Romanin, i. 130.

² Romanin, i. 179 ; and Hodgson, 93.

santry of the coast, who turned to Venice for protection. The doge now headed an expedition in person, and after taking Curzola, in the year 1000 captured and destroyed the pirate stronghold of Lagosta. The Arengo upon his triumphant return conferred upon the doge the title of Duke of Dalmatia.¹ The event was commemorated annually on Ascension Day by a state voyage to the Lido, which one hundred and eighty years later, under the auspices of Alexander III., became the wedding of the Adriatic.²

The conquest of Dalmatia marks for the republic the beginning of that empire which increased by leaps and bounds as the years went by, which was the source of much of her strength and of her greatness, but was destined eventually to be the chief cause of her weakness and of her fall. Nevertheless the acquisition of Dalmatia was altogether to the advantage of Venice. It was practically contiguous territory, the continuation of the littoral of the mother state. It required no armies for its defense, and could be sufficiently protected by the navy. In later years its people furnished troopers

¹ Romanin, i. 281.

² Hodgson, 184.

to the Venetian cavalry, and, from almost the beginning, sailors for the fleet. Its forests and its fields gave an inexhaustible supply of ship timber, fire-wood, and grain, which continues to be drawn on to-day. Its harbors furnished safe refuge to Venetian merchantmen and men of war, while its possession made the Adriatic to all intents and purposes a Venetian lake. Its acquisition was the natural and healthy expansion of a people still free and independent, and was far different from the artificial imperialism of later days.

While still recognizing the suzerainty of Constantinople, the conquered cities of Dalmatia swore allegiance to Venice, — after that they owed their over-lord, — and Venetian podestì were appointed to govern them.

It was not until long afterwards that the sway of the republic over her Dalmatian possessions became complete. Although the Emperor Alexius had, in 1085, sanctioned the authority of Venice over Dalmatia and Croatia,¹ his successors did not hesitate to dispute with her the sovereignty of the eastern coast of the Adriatic. The constant re-

¹ And. Dandolo, *Apud Muratori*, xii. 249.

bellion of her Dalmatian subjects necessitated more than once a re-conquest of their country. The time came when Dalmatia was lost to the republic. But Venice never despaired of recovering her loss, and eventually did so, to retain possession until the end.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST COUP D'ETAT

DURING the three centuries which followed the election of her first doge, the tendency of the government of Venice was constantly in the direction of an hereditary constitutional monarchy. A custom had taken root of permitting the reigning doge to associate his son or brother with him upon the throne, who was elected by the Arengo as a matter of course on the death of the crown.¹

¹ Daru, i. 102, gives the list of doges associated in power during the lives of their fathers or brothers as follows : Giovanni Galbajo, with his father, Maurizio ; Maurizio Galbajo, with his father, Giovanni ; Beato and Valentino, with their brother, Obelerio ; Giovanni and Giustiniano Partecipazio, with their father, Agnello Partecipazio ; Agnello Partecipazio, with his father, Giustiniano Partecipazio ; Giovanni Partecipazio, with his father, Giustiniano Partecipazio ; Giovanni Tradonico, with his father, Pietro Tradonico ; Giovanni Partecipazio, with his father, Orso Partecipazio ; Pietro Candiano IV., with his father, Pietro Candiano III. ; Giovanni Orseolo, with his father, Pietro Orseolo II.

Of the above Beato, Valentino, Agnello Partecipazio,

The old aristocracy of tradition, composed of the so-called Tribunal families, had become the governing caste, dependent for existence upon a complete and satisfactory understanding with the people.

The three estates of Venice, the Magori, the Mediocri, and the Minori,¹ corresponded roughly to the upper, middle, and lower classes of eighteenth century England. Members of the middle class sometimes, by extraordinary good fortune, rose to the grade above, but were more often swallowed up by that below.

While the aristocracy had been successful in retaining as its monopoly the government of the republic, and in excluding the middle class from any participation in matters of state, it had been unable to prevent the advance in material prosperity of those whom it watched so jealously. Many of the middle class, and even some plebeians, had acquired large fortunes through the same commercial channels that had enriched the

Giovanni Tradonico, and Giovanni Orseolo died before reigning alone. Giovanni Galbajo, Maurizio Galbajo, and Giovanni Partecipazio I. were deposed, and Pietro Candiano IV. was murdered.

¹ Romanin, i. 95.

patricians. The members of this new aristocracy of wealth were in much the same position as the London city families before the first reform bill. Their wealth was as great as that of the ruling class, they possessed as much or as little education as their betters, and man for man they were undoubtedly as able to govern the country effectively. Yet because they lacked the tradition, through which the aristocracy by a polite fiction was descended from that of Rome, they were of as little moment as the very beggars in the streets.

Until the beginning of the eleventh century, seven families controlled the destinies of the republic. The house of Partecipazio, or, as it was afterwards called, Badoer, furnished no fewer than eight doges, that of Candiano or Sanudo seven, and Orseolo four. A condition of society in which, with the exception of half a dozen families, there was absolute political equality between the richest merchant and the humblest gondolier, was intolerable to a class which had begun to realize that it was the principal financial support of the state.

The unrest of the middle class was not the

growth of a moment, but the development of years, culminating at last in 1033, when the first struggle took place between wealth on the one hand and the alliance of the crown and the people on the other. But the allies were outgeneraled, and wealth triumphed, accomplishing the first step in the inverse evolution of Venetian government.

The success of the first *coup d'état* was chiefly due to its author, Domenico Flabianico,¹ and if his was the immediate reward, he certainly deserved it.

Little has come down to us of the personality of Flabianico. He belonged to the new commercial aristocracy, and we know that he was a merchant.² Loyal to his friends, by whom he seems to have been held in high esteem, unscrupulous in the means he employed to gain his ends, he was an ideal leader in a movement which had for its object the manipulation of the masses for the restriction of their own liberty and the limitation of their power. He was the first to grasp the vast possibilities latent in the ominous discontent of his class. That his own aims were more or less selfish is probable; yet such

¹ Romanin, i. 300.

² Hodgson, 202, note 2.

was the intensity which class feeling had already developed that it is only fair to assume that his loyalty to class outweighed his love of self.

Using his talents as a politician, Flabianico began his campaign by stirring up popular dissatisfaction against the doge Ottone Orseolo, the third of that dynasty, who was elected in 1008. So successful was Flabianico, that in 1025 one of the most capable and moderate of her absolute rulers was forced to fly from Venice to Dalmatia. The prize for which Flabianico had struggled so long was destined for the moment to slip from his grasp. He did not dare to face the Arengo in the then disturbed state of popular feeling. One of his partisans, Pietro Barbolano, of the house of Centranico, was elected in 1026 as the successor of Orseolo, and Flabianico withdrew to Treviso,¹ to permit his tool to face the storm.

The wisdom of Flabianico's course was made manifest when, within a year, a popular reaction occurred in favor of Orseolo. Barbolano was deposed and forced to take the cowl, and Ottone Orseolo was recalled.

¹ Hazlitt, i. 124, 127.

Ottone's brother Orso, patriarch of Grado, was appointed acting doge, pending the former's return. But Ottone had died in exile, without receiving the news of his restoration. Orso continued for nearly fourteen months to fill both the dogeship and the primacy, when, declining a suggestion from his friends that he should occupy both offices permanently, he surrendered the corno and withdrew to Grado.

It is not difficult to recognize the work of Flabianico in the retirement of Orso Orseolo. Living quietly at Treviso he had through his agents made conditions intolerable for the last of the Orseoli, so that the latter was confronted with a choice of resignation or revolution, and chose what he regarded as the lesser of two evils.

His younger brother, Domenico, who was the head of a small but influential party, usurped the throne without waiting for the formality of an election, and thus played directly into the hands of the enemies of his house. The psychological moment in Flabianico's career had come, and, seizing it, he was declared elected by the Arengo, before that body had fully awakened to the fact that

there was a vacancy in the ducal office to fill. Domenico Orseolo's action was declared unconstitutional, and he was driven into banishment.

Flabianico, as the champion of the now dominant merchant class, at once proceeded to carry out its programme. Taking advantage of the carefully fostered popular suspicion in which the late dynasty was held, he rushed through the Arengo three propositions. The first abolished the principle of association and hereditary succession, making it unlawful for the doge to associate any one with him in the ducal office, and making any son of the doge ineligible to the immediate succession. The second provided for the appointment, by the doge, of two councilors, whose concurrence was decreed essential to the validity of all public acts. The third recommended the doge to summon a giunta or zonta for consultation on all matters of great importance to the state.

The third of these propositions, being merely in the nature of good advice, amounted to very little, for the doge was free to accept or decline it. It contained, however, the germ of the consiglio dei pregadi, or senate, which

began to assume importance in the reign of Jacopo Tiepolo in 1229.¹ The second proposition was also unimportant, as the doge, having the nomination of his two councilors, was unlikely to appoint any one whom he could not easily control. The really revolutionary part of the proceedings, which constituted the crux of the *coup d'état*, lay in the first proposition.

It has been justly said that Flabianico was able to earn a reputation for patriotism and unselfishness at the cheapest possible rate, for he had neither sons nor near relatives, and his apparent self-denial affected him not a particle.² Be this as it may, it did not detract from the vital importance of the change. By abolishing association and hereditary succession it forever did away with the possibility of dynastic rule, under which Venice had been governed for centuries. It took the ducal office from the hands of a few families, and transferred it to the keeping of an entire class. It increased vastly the power of the new aristocracy, and proportionally decreased that of the people. It was a fatal blow to

¹ Romanin, i. 301.

² Hazlitt, i. 129.

democracy and the first move in the direction of oligarchy.

The reign of Flabianico did much to neutralize the imputation of his enemies, — that he was merely an unscrupulous politician. During the ten years of his administration the republic was at peace at home and abroad. He ruled justly and wisely, and, according to his admirers, proved himself worthy to be ranked as one of the great men of Venetian history.

CHAPTER IV

IN THE FAMILY OF NATIONS

LOOKING back eight hundred years we are apt to think of the Venice of 1095 as a small and petty state. And so she was, measured by the standard of the Venice of 1492, or of the nations of to-day. But, in fairness, she must be measured by the height and breadth of her contemporaries. In comparison she was certainly as great as the France of Philip I., the Germany of Henry IV., or the England of William Rufus. If up to the beginning of the twelfth century she had not made more stir in the world's history it was because of lack of opportunity, and not because of lack of ability. She was powerful in the might that comes from wealth, and rich in resources derived from trade. While her government, in name at least, was still popular, the affairs of state were in the hands of a commercial aristocracy that was essentially modern in its point of view. For them everything was subordinated to the material

prosperity of Venice, and, in consequence, to that of their class. The fostering of commerce and the commercial expansion of the republic were the chief articles of their creed. The story of their efforts to obtain new markets, and to maintain an open door in the East, reads like the records of the diplomacy of the twentieth century.

The peculiar position of Venice, midway between the East and the West, her command of the Adriatic, and her possession of the largest existing merchant marine, afforded her in the Crusades an opportunity equally consonant to her interests and her inclinations. With the First Crusade she entered the family of nations as a great world-power. Had the pious zeal of Christendom been by chance directed to driving the Infidel from Spain, rather than to rescuing the Holy Sepulchre, the development of Venice would certainly have been materially delayed.

Venetian merchants had long before obtained a foothold in the Levant, Alexius had granted them the right of free trade in all the principal ports of Asia Minor,¹ and Alexandria and Antioch had contained flourishing

¹ Hodgson, 234.

Venetian colonies. It was from the former city that the body of Saint Mark was stolen by Venetian merchants as early as 827.

Venice had no scruples against trading with the Infidel. In her economy, a ducat gained was always a ducat, whether it was stamped with the symbol of the star and crescent, or with the effigy of the pope, whether it was earned by selling holy relics to her neighbors or Christian slaves to the Turk. In her commerce with the East she had not been without serious rivals. The maritime cities of Italy had all competed for a share of the Levantine trade. As the power of Pisa and Genoa grew, Venice saw in the future possibilities of far more dangerous rivalry upon the sea, an element she was beginning to regard as her own monopoly.

The soldiers of the First Crusade, with few exceptions, traveled to Constantinople, the place of rendezvous, overland. The expedition, once on its way, afforded, none the less, a most profitable investment in the transport by sea of recruits, provisions, and material of war.¹ Moreover, Venice could not afford to

¹ A History of the Italian Republic, by J. C. L. de Sismondi, London, 1832, 1 vol. 29.

permit Pisa or Genoa to obtain any commercial privileges in the Holy Land, to her exclusion. She allowed her piety to have full sway, and embarked, somewhat late in the day it is true, on the First Crusade.

Let us give Venice her due, and concede that her piety was as sincere as that of her allies; she, none the less, was the only power of Christendom so to combine piety with profit as to come out of the Holy Wars far richer than she had gone in. When in 1099 the news of the capture of Jerusalem reached the lagoon, the republic at once dispatched to the Holy Land a fleet of 207¹ sail, under the joint command of Giovanni Michiel, son of the reigning doge, Vitali Michiel, and of Arrigo Contarini, bishop of Castello, under whom the name of the see was changed from that of Olivolo.² This first expedition to the Holy Land partook more of the nature of a piratical cruise than of a pilgrimage, the direct participation of Venice in the objects of the Crusaders being limited to coöperating with Tancred in the siege of Caifa.³

Two events, however, of great importance

¹ Navagiero, quoted by Hazlitt, i. 145.

² Romanin, ii. 14.

³ Hodgson, 241.

in Venetian history occurred during the First Crusade. It was a pious age, and Venice was not unwilling to turn the devotion of the world to her own advantage. The possession of holy relics meant pilgrimages for their worship, and pilgrims in the city meant a source of profit not to be despised. The bodies of Saint Theodore the martyr, of Saint Nicholas the great, and of Saint Nicholas the lesser were therefore taken by force from the people of Myra at the outset of the Crusade.¹

The second event was of more serious consequence. The Emperor Alexius had done all in his power to dissuade Venice from taking part in the Holy War. He very rightly regarded her as his principal commercial and political rival, and was not blind to the fact that any advantage gained by Venice in the Levant must necessarily be to his own injury. Finding his arguments useless, he induced the Pisans to take up his cause.² A naval war followed. The two fleets met off Rhodes, and the Pisans were utterly defeated.³ The effect of the victory was to intensify the rapidly developing ill feeling between the two cities. The results of the First Crusade to Venice

¹ Romanin, ii. 15. ² Hazlitt, i. 146. ³ Romanin, ii. 15.

were an increase in the wealth of her merchants, the acquisition of the bodies of three saints, and the undying hatred of the Pisans.

For several years the republic took no part in the affairs of the Holy Land. In 1101 she helped the Countess Matilda reduce Ferrara, and in return was allowed to maintain a consul in that city, and to build a church, which, as was her custom, she dedicated to San Marco. Meanwhile recovery from the disastrous fires of 1106, in which large and important sections of the city were consumed, and the destruction by inundation and earthquake of the town of Malamocco gave her ample employment at home.

Her position in the world steadily advanced. By the treaty of 1111 the Western emperor, Henry V., while increasing the trade privileges of Venice, acknowledged her sovereignty over certain parts of Dalmatia, Istria, and Croatia, and clearly defined the boundaries of Padua.¹

During the years that Venice had remained inactive in the East her merchants had continued to maintain a profitable transport and supply service with the seat of war.

¹ Romanin, ii. 27.

In the year 1111, under the doge Ordelafo Falier, Venice was induced to send a fleet of one hundred sail to the aid of Baldwin I. in the reduction of Sidon. The expedition arrived only in time to be present at the capitulation of the city. But such was the influence of the republic that her future help was purchased by the grant of a part of S. Jean d' Acre, and the promise of a magistrate, a church, a street, a mill, a bakery, a bath, and the use of her own weights and measures in every city under the dominion of the king of Jerusalem.¹

In 1116 the doge Falier was killed before the walls of Zara, in a successful expedition undertaken with the help of the two emperors for the recovery of Dalmatia from the Hungarians. Under Falier's successor, Domenico Michiel, Venice took part in the Crusade of 1123, which culminated in the siege and capture of Tyre on July 7, 1124.

During this memorable siege the Venetians contributed largely to the success of the Crusaders, and claimed and received a proportionate reward. They were not only granted the same privileges they had received in

¹ And. Dandolo, *Apud Muratori*, xii. 264.

Sidon, but were given, in advance of capture, one third of Tyre and Ascalon ; their imports were permitted to enter the conquered cities free of duty, and their merchants were exempted from all taxes.¹

Before leaving the Holy Land, Michiel heard that the Hungarian king, Stephen II., had captured Spalato and Traù, in Dalmatia, and that the Greek emperor still continued in his unfriendly attitude to Venice.² Accordingly, to balance accounts with the latter, he stopped long enough on his voyage home to capture and plunder Rhodes, Scio, Samos, Paros, Mitylene, Tenedos, and Lesbos. The next year he recaptured Spalato and Traù, and turning southward reduced Cephalonia, and brought the emperor to terms. Calojoannes was only too glad to purchase immunity from further Venetian operations, by confirming the republic in the commercial privileges granted by his father Alexius.

The direct result of the activity of Venice, in the early Crusades, was the acquisition of an enormous amount of plunder taken not

¹ And. Dandolo, *Apud Muratori*, xii. 271, and Andrea Morosini, quoted by Romanin, ii. 47.

² Hodgson, 259.

only from the Saracens, but from the subjects of the Greek emperor as well, while indirectly the republic gained much prestige by the part she played in European politics of the twelfth century, and her commerce increased to such an extent that the monopoly of the sea became a not altogether remote possibility. Constantinople realized clearly that her hitherto undisputed supremacy was seriously menaced, and that it could only be a question of time when the danger would become acute. She had been worsted in the first skirmishes, and waited expectantly the death-struggle that was bound to come.

The relations of Venice with Frederick Barbarossa, extending from the accession of the latter to the imperial throne in 1152 to the conclusion of the Peace of Venice in 1177, gave her a wide field for the display of her genius for diplomacy. During this period she brought to perfection her policy of carrying water on both shoulders, of playing on both sides of international complications, that she might be in a position to profit, no matter what might be the outcome.

From the beginning of his rule, Frederick was absorbed by one all-consuming ambition,

— the restoration of the head of the empire to the place held by his ancestor, Charlemagne. During the thirty-eight years of his eventful reign this policy occupied him to the exclusion of all else. The task to which he had devoted himself necessitated the subjugation of Italy and the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre. Venice not only shared with Frederick the enemies his dual policy had forced upon him, — the pope, the Eastern emperor, the Normans, and the Saracens, — but from secular as well as religious motives was in hearty accord with his purposes in the East. From his Italian aspirations she as heartily dissented. It was for her interest that the Holy Places should be in Christian hands, provided the open door was maintained, while it was equally to her interest that no one strong power should rule over a united Lombardy. A Lombardy under the absolute control of the emperor would be but a step in the direction of the absorption of Venice herself in the scheme of empire. The sympathies of Venice were therefore divided between the emperor and the Lombard cities.¹

The Guelphic cities, which included Crema,

¹ Hodgson, 266 *et seq.*

Piacenza, Asti, Rosate, and Tortona, concentrated their power at Milan, the strongest city of Lombardy, while the Ghibelline cities of Rome, Lucca, Cremona, Treviso, Verona, Padua, and Aquileia formed upon Pavia.¹

In 1154 Frederick crossed the Alps, and after reducing Chieri, Asti, Rosate, and Tortona, but without capturing Milan, was crowned by Hadrian in the Leonine city, and returned to Germany.

In 1158 Pope Hadrian IV. died, and the disputed election of the rival popes, Alexander III. and Victor IV., followed. Frederick promptly acknowledged Victor, and placed Alexander under the ban of the empire, who replied by excommunicating Frederick. In 1159 Frederick again crossed the Alps, and in 1161 (August) besieged Milan, which after a heroic defense of seven months capitulated. The fall of Milan was followed by the conquest of a large part of Lombardy, after which Frederick retired to Germany.

In 1164 Victor IV. died and the Ghibelline cardinals elected as his successor Pascal III., who, like his rival, Alexander, was soon obliged to fly from Italy. On May 29, 1167,

¹ Sismondi, 32.

was signed the treaty of Pontita which organized the Lombard League, consisting at first of nine cities, afterwards increased to nineteen. From this time the war went on with varying fortune to the opponents, until the defeat of Legnano inclined Frederick to consider seriously the abandonment of those pretensions which the Lombards resisted so vigorously.¹

Venice had, from the first, adhered to her policy of neutrality. In 1162 Ulrich, patriarch of Aquileia, and the bishop of Adria, with the aid of Ferrara and Vicenza, and probably inspired by Frederick, had attacked Cavarzere. Venice revenged herself upon the two prelates, and let the matter rest. On the organization of the Lombard League, and during its life,² she subsidized it with large sums of money, while in 1174 she joined Frederick's lieutenant, the archbishop of Mainz, in the unsuccessful siege of Ancona, the last stronghold of the Byzantine emperor in Italy.³

She had followed her policy so well that she retained the good will of both Frederick and the league, while incurring the enmity of neither. Accordingly when in 1176, ex-

¹ Sismondi, 51. ² Romanin, ii. 79. ³ Romanin, ii. 99.

hausted by eighteen years of constant and undecisive warfare, Italy at last sought peace, Venice was chosen by common consent as the most available seat for the peace congress.

The Peace of Venice was sworn to on August 1, 1177, by the representatives of the pope, the emperor, the king of Sicily, and thirteen Lombard cities, who promised that their principals should in due time add their oaths. The selection of Venice as the place of the signing of the peace was of special importance to her as a recognition of her independence from both pope and emperor. It has been said that she was chosen as being "subject to God alone."¹

Tradition has made Venice take a far more prominent part than history concedes her, in behalf of the pope against the emperor, even telling of a victory over the imperial fleet at Salvore.² Her position at the peace was important enough to need no exaggeration.

¹ *Relatio de Pace, Veneta*, quoted by Hodgson, 317.

² Romanin, ii. p. 116, finds some evidence in support of the tradition that a naval engagement took place between the fleets of Frederick and the republic.

The Peace of Venice was the first compact in Europe between a monarch and his subjects.¹ The emperor acknowledged Alexander as canonical pope without the humiliating ceremonies that legend has described;² while Alexander restored Frederick to the pale of the church. Truces were arranged with Sicily and the Lombard cities, which eventually became permanent; and Italy, after the expenditure of vast treasure and much useless bloodshed, found at last the peace of which she stood so much in need.

¹ Sismondi, 51.

² Although Daru, i. 174, holds the contrary opinion, Romanin, ii. 115, absolutely rejects the story of the humiliation of the emperor, as well as that of the previous flight of the pope to Venice.

CHAPTER V

THE SECOND COUP D'ETAT

WHILE the state gained much officially from the early Crusades, the chief material gain was derived by those who had financed the various expeditions. The aristocracy, controlling as it did the commerce of the nation, naturally profited by the increase of mercantile prosperity. With increased wealth came increased power, all of which was utilized for the further consolidation and development of the class.

The *coup d'état* of 1033 had accomplished the primary object for which it was undertaken. It had rendered impossible dynastic rule, and had greatly increased the number of families from whom the doge might be chosen.

During the first three hundred and fifty years of her history Venice had been governed by seven families, and during two hundred and twenty-five years of that period the

throne had been occupied by members of the three families of Badoer, Sanudo, and Orseolo. During one hundred and thirty-nine years following the enactment of the laws of Flabianico ten doges had worn the corno, among whom as many as seven different families had been represented. Yet while the crown had been worn by the members of more families than formerly, the power of the doge remained substantially unshaken. The ducal council, created by Flabianico, had singularly failed to accomplish the purpose for which it was intended. The two councilors, being appointed by the doge, had proved themselves absolutely subservient to his will, and quite ineffectual in limiting his authority.¹

The aristocracy, conscious of its strength, acquired with increased prosperity during the century and a half that followed the installation of its first great champion in the ducal office, only awaited a favorable opportunity to assert itself at the expense of the prerogative of the crown. An opportunity, ideal to its purpose, came in the assassination of the doge Vitali Michiel III. in 1172. The doge, by a series of misfortunes, for which he was

¹ Romanin, ii. p. 90.

in no way personally responsible, had brought the crown into great disrepute with the people. He had commanded the fleet in a disastrous campaign against the Byzantine emperor, and had been obliged to stand sponsor for a forced loan which, although it resulted in the organization of the first national bank in Europe,¹ was received with the execration that similar financial proceedings have always incurred. As the outcome of the popular misery and discontent, the doge was murdered on his way to mass at San Zaccaria.

That the aristocracy took any part in fomenting the outbreak of which Michiel was the victim, or that it was in any way responsible for his death, has never been even remotely suggested. It was, however, willing to take advantage of the opportunity his death offered. The consent of the Arengo was obtained for a revision of the Promissione, or coronation oath, and six months later the commission to which the duty had been intrusted reported, under the guise of a revision of the oath, an entirely new scheme of government, amount-

¹ Romanin, ii. 85.

ing to a complete change in the constitution, which, with that infinite political dexterity of which the aristocracy was the master, was put through the Arengo despite the loudly expressed disapproval of some of the people.¹

For the purpose of collecting the forced loan of 1171, the city had been divided into six sections or *sestieri*,² which exist unchanged to-day.³ The new law required each *sestiero* to elect once a year, on September 29, two electors, each of whom in turn should choose forty representatives, four of whom might belong to the elector's own family, the four hundred and eighty thus chosen to constitute the Great Council, or *Gran Consiglio*, wherein were lodged the powers of legislation and appointment.

In matters of great importance, especially in those involving the foreign policy of the state, the custom was continued of calling together a council of *pregadi*, to prepare matter for submission to the Great Council. In the reign of the doge Giacomo Tie-

¹ Romanin, ii. 93.

² Romanin, ii. 84.

³ Castello, San Marco, Canareggio, Dorsoduro, San Polo, and Santa Croce.

polo (1229–1249) this council of *pregadi* took stable form under the name of the senate.¹

Each of the *sestieri* nominated a member of the doge's council. These six councilors were chosen at the time of the doge's election, and held office until the installation of his successor, administering the government during the interregnum. They were independent of the doge, and without their concurrence no act of the crown was valid.²

The election of the doge was transferred from the *Arengo* to the Great Council. On the death of the crown, the Great Council was required to elect, from its membership, thirty-four electors, who in turn chose eleven of their own number. These eleven balloted for the doge, nine votes being required to elect. On the election of a doge he was proclaimed to the *Arengo* by the procurator from the altar of San Marco, in the words, "*Questo è il vostro doge, se vi piace.*"³ In

¹ Romanin, ii. 92 ; but Daru, i. 186, and Hazlitt, i. 214, date the formal organization of the senate, as such, from this time.

² Romanin, ii. 352.

³ "This is your doge, if it pleases you." Muazzo quoted by Romanin, ii. 93.

1178 the method of election was changed, the Great Council choosing four electors, who chose forty, by not less than three votes, and not more than one from the same family, who in turn elected the doge.¹

At the close of the twelfth century was instituted the Council of Forty, or Quarantia. The judicial power of the state had been lodged in the doge and his councilors; but as the city grew and litigation increased, it was found that the doge and his council were unable to deal with the rapidly growing press of business. Besides the duties of deciding civil appeals, and pronouncing sentence in criminal cases, the Forty became the consultative council, while the Great Council remained the legislative. The Forty were charged with the duty of preparing all matters for submission to the Great Council, and of receiving ambassadors. They became before long the chief executives of the republic.² About the same time were created the *Magistrato del Proprio* and the *Magistrato del Forestier*, courts of first instance in cases, respectively between citizens, and between foreigners, or between citizens and foreigners, and the *avogadori del*

¹ Romanin, ii. 123.

² Romanin, ii. 137.

comun, corresponding roughly to the French procureurs généraux of the *ancien régime*.¹

Of the three *coups d'état* in the history of Venice, the second, or that of 1172, was unquestionably the most revolutionary. While the Arengo was still permitted to exist in name, and was in fact called together to have submitted for its approval the name of a newly elected doge, and the questions of peace and war, the second *coup d'état* marks its actual extinction as a power in the state. The old town-meeting had passed away, and a government nominally representative had taken its place. The choice of the electors of members of the Great Council was, it is true, still left to the people, but in a community such as Venice, the aristocracy could have had, and did have, but little difficulty in insuring the success of its own candidates. An occasional plebeian might find his way into the council, but such accidents were rare, and their very occurrence served to delude the people with the fiction that they were the masters and the Great Council their servant.

The Great Council was the fountain head of power, for not only was it the legislative

¹ Hodgson, 344.

and appointing body, but it was also the creator of the doge.

The aristocracy first took concrete form as a class by the revolution of 1033 ; by the revolution of 1172 it became the governing oligarchy of the state. It was destined to grow in strength and might before the end, as the crown was destined to become in time little more than a figure-head in the scheme of government. Officially the doge was still declared to govern by the grace of God, yet henceforth, in fact, he was only permitted to rule within circumscribed limitations, by the grace of the oligarchy, of which he was a member.

CHAPTER VI

CONSTANTINOPLE

THE year 1172 brought to a close the first period of Venetian history. During that period she had developed from a democracy into an oligarchy; she had grown from a loose confederacy of a few scattered and wretched villages into one of the most centralized and one of the richest countries of Europe. From direct dependence, first upon one emperor, then upon the other, from a petty colony often following the wishes of the imperial præfect in matters of the most trivial detail, she had become the peer of the mightiest kingdoms, her independence recognized by all. Her ships covered the Mediterranean and her influence followed her flag. From the pontiff himself she had received the ring, with which she solemnly declared her dominion of the seas and the undisputed fact that the Adriatic had become *mare clausum*.

The next century was to see her advance

still further until, as the result of the fall of Constantinople, she sprang to the forefront of nations as one of the most powerful empires of the world.

In 1198, the year in which Innocent III. became pope, Foulques, curé of Neuilly-sur-Marne, preached the Fourth Crusade. Innocent threw himself heart and soul into the movement, and the next year announced that he and the members of the Sacred College had contributed a tenth of their revenues for the recovery of the sepulchre, and called on the clergy of Christendom to contribute at least a fortieth of theirs for the holy cause. Western Europe was aroused as it had seldom been before, and priest and prince vied with each other in their eagerness to take the cross.

Previous expeditions that had traveled overland to the East had found the journey not only costly but difficult and dangerous. For every reason a sea-route was much to be preferred, and the leaders turned to Venice, the greatest maritime power of the age, as being best qualified to furnish transport for the army.¹

¹ Romanin, ii. 147.

The simple-minded chivalry who appealed to Venice in the first year of the thirteenth century were as free from guile as the trees of their ancestral forests. What they asked of Venice was help in God's name and for God's honor. They were treated courteously, and assured that Venice was as anxious to serve the Master as they. They should have all the help they wanted, and more, for Venice was ready to furnish at her own cost fifty armed galleons. In return the pilgrims were to pay before departure 85,000 standard marks of Cologne (about 4,250,000 francs of our own day)¹ for the transport and keep for one year, of 4500 knights, 9000 squires, and 20,000 foot soldiers, and in addition were to divide all conquests equally with Venice.² Surely a hard bargain, worthy of a community where prosperity was founded upon trade and in which the governing class was grounded upon wealth. The Crusaders, having no option, signed the contract, and the Fourth Crusade began under the nominal leadership of Bonifazio di Monferrato.³ But

¹ Daru, i. 194.

² The Chronicle of Geoffrey Villehardouin, translated by T. Smith. William Pickering, London, 1829, 13.

³ I have followed the spelling of Morosini and Romanin.

the master mind of the expedition was the doge, Enrico Dandolo, who was chosen to command the fleet. His was the hand that guided the movement, his was the brain that brought it through despair to triumph. An infirm old man upon his accession, ninety at the beginning of the Crusade, with failing eyesight, poetically intensified by tradition into total blindness inflicted by the treacherous Emperor Manuel,¹ he stands out in Venetian history as the first really great man the republic had produced. That he sympathized with the objects of the Crusade cannot be doubted, for he was a loyal son of the Church. But he was a Venetian first and a Catholic afterwards, and did not hold it inconsistent with the duty he owed the pope to serve his country before he served Rome.

After its recovery by Vitale Michiel II., in 1166, the Dalmatian city of Zara had again revolted and placed itself under the king of Hungary. In 1187 an expedition for its conquest was recalled, because of the pendency of the Third Crusade, and in 1202 it still held out against the republic. During the spring

¹ The story of Dandolo's total blindness is rejected by Romanin, ii. 97 ; Hazlitt, i. 233, and Hodgson, 298.

of that year, the pilgrims began to come to Venice, but scarcely a third of the expected number arrived. Money was as scarce with the Crusaders as were recruits, and, to make matters worse, Venice pressed incessantly for the payment of the 85,000 marks due her.

It is uncertain whether Dandolo had from the first foreseen the impossibility of the pilgrims carrying out their part of the contract, and had originally intended to use them for his own purposes, or whether, acting in good faith in the beginning, he merely took advantage of their unexpected financial difficulties. Be this as it may, when the barons confessed their insolvency, he used their extremity to cajole them into joining him in the recovery of Zara, offering to permit them to pay their debt with their share of the spoil of the city. The Crusaders of necessity agreed to the terms offered by the doge, and the siege and reduction of Zara followed.

Shortly after the capture of Zara, there arrived at the camp of the Crusaders Alexius, the son of the emperor, Isaac Angelus, who had been deposed and blinded by his brother, the usurper, Alexius III. The young Alexius asked the aid of the pilgrims in the restora-

tion of his father to the throne, and fortified his request with the support of his brother-in-law Philip of Swabia, who offered 200,000 marks in silver, 10,000 men at his own cost for a year, and 500 forever after, in return for their help.

Dandolo it was again¹ who, with infinite tact and masterfulness, deflected the course of the Crusade, from the Holy Land and the rescue of the sepulchre, to Constantinople and the conquest of a Christian people. The weapon of which Dandolo made use in bringing his allies to the siege of Zara was the debt they owed his country in standard marks of Cologne. But the spoil of Zara discharged the debt, and the only power he held over them in forcing them to brave the wrath of the pontiff, and risk their own damnation, was the moral force of a strong man, infirm and old in body, but of that true greatness which knows no failure and insures success.

The libel that Venice betrayed Christendom, in the interests of the Infidel, as the

¹ Hodgson, 437, is inclined to give the chief credit, or discredit, for the deflection of the Crusade from the Holy Land to Constantinople, to Bonifazio di Monferrato. Hazlitt, i. 253, gives the chief credit to Dandolo.

outcome of a treaty with the sultan of Egypt, has long since been disproved.¹ Venice needed no secret inducements to desire the humiliation of the Byzantine Empire. Constantinople from being almost her parent city had become her greatest rival and a constant menace to her sea power. The arguments that appealed to her allies appealed with double force to her, for it seemed to her rulers that whatever temporary benefit the Crusaders might derive from the subjugation of Constantinople would be permanent in the case of the republic.

Constantinople had from the first viewed with ever growing disfavor the efforts of Western Europe to take the holy places from the Infidel. The presence of a Western power in the Levant was necessarily a challenge to her authority, and the permanence of such a government meant that sooner or later it would become a menace to her very existence. The Byzantine emperors had done all in their power to discourage the successive expeditions to the East. They had sowed discord among the Crusaders, and had more than

¹ Hanotaux, *Revue Historique*, iv. 74, and Hodgson, 428 *et seq.*

once fomented internal warfare among them by both the power of persuasion and of the purse. As the nearest and most natural military base from which to descend upon Palestine, a friendly power at Constantinople was of the first importance.

The strategical advantage of capturing Constantinople appealed to some of the leaders, the offer of Philip appealed to others, while many were influenced by the promise of Alexius, that his father, if restored, would bring the Greek Church under the authority of Rome. Dandolo secured the adhesion of Monferrato and of Baldwin of Flanders to his plan. Despite the opposition of the pope, the request of Alexius was granted, and the Crusade turned aside from the Holy Land. Constantinople was invested, and after a protracted siege, surrendered at discretion, Dandolo in person leading the last assault upon its walls.¹ Isaac was restored, his son being crowned as joint emperor with him.

The relations between the Greeks and the Crusaders soon became strained. The emperors failed to carry out the agreement made by Philip of Swabia and Alexius, with their

¹ Villehardouin, 76.

allies, and shortly afterwards followed up their breach of faith by attacking the pilgrims, by whom they were worsted. Negotiations were begun, having for their object an adjustment of the difficulty, but before any conclusion was reached, Alexius Ducas, called Murtzuphlos, from his heavy eyebrows, organized a palace conspiracy, which resulted in the murder of both emperors, and his usurpation of the throne.

The Crusaders once more besieged Constantinople, which they captured on April 12, 1204, and Venice became the partitioner of the Empire of the East. The crown of empire might have been hers; but had Dandolo been elected emperor she would have at once entered the feudal system, from which she had always succeeded in remaining free.¹ She preferred the substance of authority to its shadow, and, conferring the purple upon Baldwin of Flanders, was content to be the power behind the throne.

At the partition of the Greek Empire, Venice, under the terms of a treaty made before the capture of Constantinople, received the Ionian Islands, the Sporades, the Cyclades,

¹ Romanin, ii. 180.

des, the Morea, part of Thessaly, the coasts of the Hellespont, the province of Servia, and the cities of Adrianople, Trajanople, Didymotichos, and Durazzo.¹ Shortly afterward she bought Candia from Bonifazio de Monferrato, for 10,000 marks of silver.² Her new acquisitions gave the republic an unbroken coast-line from Venice to the Hellespont. In addition she received one-fourth part of the city of Constantinople, which was to be governed by a Venetian bailo or podesta, and the right to nominate the patriarch. Her new possessions were parceled out in feoff to Venetian nobles, and the doge added to his other titles that of "Lord of a fourth part, and a half of the empire of Romania."³

Upon its face the conquest of Constantinople was an event fraught with nothing but advantage to the republic. It brought to her an enormous increase of territory and population, and changed her from the greatest city of Europe into the most powerful nation. The spoils of the war not only served

¹ Codex Ambrosianus, Apud Muratori, xii. 326 *et seq.*

² Marino Sanudo, Apud Muratori, *Rer. Ital. Script.* xxii. 533.

³ This title was borne by the doges until 1356, under Giovanni Dolfín. Romanin, ii. 185.

to beautify the city, and fill its treasury, but added vastly to the wealth of its citizens. As long as the Latin Empire of the East lasted its real ruler was the Venetian podesta. Instead of a treacherous enemy at her very threshold, she now had her own official and her own subjects. Her merchants were given the advantage over their rivals of trading with Venetian colonies that occupied the principal points of the Levant.

As long as the Byzantine power existed, whatever may have been its inconveniences, it served as a buffer between Christendom and the Infidel. Its very nature doomed the Latin Empire from its inception. As soon as it fell, Venice in her turn became the buffer. It was a task, as history proves, with which single-handed she was unable to cope. The conquest of Constantinople marks the beginning of the glory of Venice, but it was the first step toward her destruction.

As the outcome of her triumphs in the East, Venice reaped the inevitable results of greatness, the envy and jealousy of her colleagues in the Crusade, the hatred especially of her great trade-rival Genoa.

War became unavoidable, and in 1218

the Genoese fleet was completely routed. In 1256 war was again declared against Genoa, and once more, for the time at least, Venice humbled her rival. But Genoa never forgot and never forgave her humiliation, and as long as she remained a nation devoted her energies to revenge.

CHAPTER VII

THE THIRD COUP D'ETAT

THE fall of the Byzantine Empire had opened an era of unexampled prosperity for the republic. Everything to which she had turned her hand had prospered. Victory had succeeded victory, triumph had followed triumph. Wealth beyond the dreams of earlier days had flowed into the coffers of the nobility. She had become not only the carrier and the sales-agent of Europe, but the banker and the pawnbroker as well. Monarchs competed for the privilege of investing in her funds, and an emperor had pawned the crown of thorns with the house of Morosini.¹

During this period the aristocracy had constantly cared for the interests of its order. In 1229 had been instituted two commissions, one, consisting of five members, for the correction of the coronation oath, the other, consisting of three members, for an

¹ Tillemont, *Vie de Saint Louis*, Paris, 1846, ii. 336.

inquisition into the conduct of the doge on his decease. The correctors had three times radically modified the ducal authority.¹ They had forbidden him to engage in commerce, or to own property outside the state; they had required him to open all dispatches in the presence of the ducal councilors; and his relatives were not permitted to hold public office. The election of the doge had, moreover, been made more and more complicated, the final choice being in the hands of a college of forty-one electors, selected by a long series of elections and drawings by lot.

The oligarchy was confident of its control when it received a rude awakening in the administration of Giovanni Dandolo, who was elected in 1280. Dandolo belonged to one of the oldest families in the republic, he was the leader of the popular party,² and during the nine years of his reign proved to the oligarchy that, in the hands of a strong and fearless man, the ducal authority was still capable of great development. Strictly complying with the letter of the constitution,

¹ On the accession of Jacopo Tiepolo in 1229, Lorenzo Tiepolo in 1268, and Jacopo Contarini in 1275.

² Daru, i. 376.

he was able by the force of his personality to ignore its spirit, and, to the disgust of the oligarchy, governed almost autocratically.

That the people should have found a champion in the duke caused the nobility no little anxiety, but during his lifetime efforts to limit his authority proved unavailing. Had Dandolo's successor as leader of the plebeians, Giacomo Tiepolo, possessed the courage of his predecessor, it is more than likely that he might have forced his own election as doge.¹ Popular clamor was for him, and popular feeling ran so high that Tiepolo would have been swept into office had not his courage failed him, and had he not been persuaded by his aristocratic friends to retire from the field and leave Venice.

With the Piazza crowded by a turbulent mob, clamoring for their favorite Tiepolo, with popular excitement at fever heat, almost at the point of boiling over into open revolt, it is not surprising that the oligarchy was content to elect its candidate, Pietro Gradenigo, without any alterations in the terms of the coronation oath. It was a dangerous situation, requiring careful handling. The crown once

¹ Romanin, ii. 323.

again in the hands of the nobles, they could afford to move slowly in taking the last step toward absolute power. As a question of life and death to the class, it was essential that the powers of the crown should be so restricted that the recurrence upon the throne of a strong man with popular leanings would not imperil the existence of the oligarchy.

Gradenigo was an instrument admirably suited to the designs of the aristocracy. A brilliant man with great tenacity of purpose, his breeding and his associations had made him the devoted servant of his class. It is no exaggeration to say that if the people as a whole were "Venetians first and Catholics afterwards," for the members of the oligarchy love of class took the place of love of country.

The rule of the cross came to an end in the Holy Land at the beginning of Gradenigo's reign.¹ The disaster to the Christian arms was viewed with philosophical equanimity by Venice, for as a business venture the Crusades had ceased to be a paying investment, and the Mohammedan rulers of the

¹ Gradenigo was elected November 25, 1289; Tripoli fell April 26, 1289, and Acre in May, 1291.

holy places gave promise of proving better customers than their predecessors. Genoa also realized the trade possibilities of the new rule in the Levant, and hostilities between the two republics broke out in 1294. The war dragged on with varying success to the two combatants, until the overwhelming defeat of Curzola left Venice, in 1298, thankful to accept the offer of Matteo Visconti to mediate between the opponents.

That the war was prolonged beyond all reason and all necessity by the ruling class of Venice, for a selfish and a sinister purpose, admits of but little doubt.¹ While the people were distracted with the horrors of a bloody war, the oligarchy was quietly accomplishing a revolution in government that fixed the keystone of the fabric of its power.²

During the reign of Giovanni Dandolo no less than three efforts were made to exclude plebeians from the Great Council. But the supporters of the autocrat upon the throne were too well organized, and on each occasion the aristocracy suffered humiliating defeat.

¹ Hazlitt, i. 474.

² For the detailed history of the Serrata del Gran Consiglio, see Romanin, ii. 341 *et seq.*

The practice had gradually arisen of electing the members of the Great Council at various times regardless of the requirement of the law, and eventually in utter disregard of the constitution. The sestieral electors were done away with, and two electors were chosen from each of the procuratorial divisions of the city, of Qua and Là Canale.

In 1296, on March 6, the aristocracy thought the time opportune to renew the effort that had thrice been unsuccessful under Dandolo. But once again the popular party triumphed. The election of the following autumn was held according to the procuratorial divisions of the city. The people were so occupied by the war with Genoa as to have little leisure for domestic politics.

Bribery and intimidation were employed to an unprecedented degree,¹ and a packed legislative body of two hundred members was returned ready to do the bidding of the corruptionists who had elected it.

On February 28, 1297, the chiefs of the Forty submitted to the Great Council eight resolutions which provided in brief : for the election of members of the Great Council for

¹ Hazlitt, i. 478.

one year by the Forty, twelve votes being required to elect, — only those who had served in the Great Council during the four preceding years being eligible; for the choice of three electors each year, with power to nominate to the Forty, in conformity with directions to be given them by the college, others who might not have served in the Great Council during the four preceding years, — such nominations to be voted upon by the Forty, twelve votes being required to elect. The resolutions were not to be annulled except by the vote of five of the Ducal Council, twenty-five of the Forty, and two thirds of the Great Council. They were, moreover, to be submitted at the beginning of the year on fifteen consecutive days to the Great Council for approval. They were avowedly provisional and experimental, the Great Council having the right to annul them after a year of trial.

The year passed away, and the government, with the disingenuousness that had characterized it during the entire pendency of the proposition, brought it unexpectedly before the Great Council on September 11, instead of September 29, as the resolutions

themselves provided.¹ The news of the defeat of Curzola had just been received, Venice was thoroughly demoralized, and in a thinly attended meeting of the packed council the resolutions were agreed to. They were again submitted on September 29, 1299, and again agreed to.

The citizens found themselves divided by the law of 1299 into three classes : (1) those who had not been themselves, nor had had ancestors members of the Great Council ; (2) those whose ancestors had been members ; and (3) those who had been members themselves, and whose ancestors had been members.² The first were called new men, and were not admitted to the council except by favor, the second were included from time to time, while the third possessed the absolute right to be elected. As time went on, admission to the Great Council by favor became more and more difficult. It was enacted by the law of October 28, 1307, that every new candidate for the Great Council, to be elected must receive twenty-five votes of the Forty, and five of the six ducal councilors ; and

¹ Marin, v. 155 ; quoted by Hazlitt, i. 481.

² Romanin, ii. 346.

by the law of March 16, 1316, his election required thirty votes of the Forty and a majority of the Great Council itself. The law of 1315 established a list upon which was inscribed the name of every citizen who had reached the age of eighteen, and who was eligible to the Great Council. Subsequent to 1319 these became members of the council without election on reaching the age of twenty-five. Bastards, even if subsequently legitimized, and ecclesiastics were declared ineligible. Finally, in 1506 the Libro d' Oro was instituted, the official roll of the nobility. Thus by little short of fraud and chicanery was accomplished what was known as the "Serrata del Gran Consiglio," or the closing of the Great Council.

The government was now restricted entirely to the upper class, and the oligarchy was finally and absolutely established. The last step in the inverse evolution of the Venetian government had been taken, and its spirit had been irrevocably fixed for all time. Whatever change was destined to take place in the future was only in its external form. Henceforth the history of the republic is merely that of a set and rigid government,

complete in its growth, incapable of further internal variation, with little possibility of change except in the direction of decay and disintegration.

The history of Venice, until the beginning of the fourteenth century, is that of her growth; from then until the end of the eighteenth it is that of her decline.

At the close of the thirteenth century the government of Venice was administered by four councils; the Great Council, the Lesser Council, the Senate, and the Forty. The Great Council consisted at first of 480 members; after its closing, its membership increased rapidly, until in 1510, when it included practically the entire nobility, it reached its maximum of 1671 members.¹ It was the legislative body of the republic and the base of the oligarchic structure. It appointed almost every official, and exercised a general jurisdiction over the affairs of the state.

The Lesser or Doge's Council consisted of six members elected by the Great Council, one from each sestiero. The presidency of the senate was lodged in commission in this council and in the doge. With the doge

¹ Romanin, ii. 347.

and the three chiefs of the Forty it constituted the Signoria, the official head of the state. It received all petitions addressed to the doge, proposed legislation to the Great Council, prepared propositions for submission to, and, with the doge, was charged with the execution of the decrees of the Forty.

The Council of Pregadi or Senate became finally established in 1230. It originally consisted of sixty members chosen by four electors from the Great Council, and subsequently by the Great Council itself. No family could be represented in the senate by more than one member. Senators held office for one year, but were eligible for reëlection. The senate was charged especially with matters affecting commerce, both domestic and foreign, with the care of the merchant marine, the army and the navy, peace and war, and the naming of ambassadors. It was soon increased by the addition of a giunta or zonta of twenty nobles, nominated by itself, and confirmed by the Forty. The number of the zonta was afterwards increased to forty and later to sixty, and other officials were added, so that the senate was at last composed of nearly three hundred members.

The Council of Forty, or Quarantia, held appellate jurisdiction in civil and criminal cases. It proposed legislation, and controlled the mint and the currency, and received foreign ambassadors.

On occasions of grave moment, as for example during the war of Ancona in 1277, when prompt action was imperative, the Great Council elected a special commission or college of so-called *savii* (literally, wise men) as a sort of temporary dictatorship.¹

The four councils, of which the doge was chairman, formed the base of the scheme of government. From them were derived all the officials of the republic.

Romanin, ii. 351.

CHAPTER VIII

THE QUERINI-TIEPOLO CONSPIRACY

THE oligarchy was at last firmly established in power, but its members were aware that that power could only be retained by the exercise of the greatest tact, the utmost vigilance, and uncompromising firmness. As long as the aristocracy was true to itself, it was unconquerable; the moment it became false to its own interests, its power, and with it that of its asset, Venice, began to decline.

It required more than a century of the iron rule of the nobles to stifle the aspirations of the people. The resentment of their betrayal lasted until the end, and found expression more than once. The families of the old nobility, which had furnished the early doges to the republic, required time to accustom themselves to the triumph of a comparatively new order, of which, it is true, they were members, but which consisted for

the most part of families ennobled long after the beginning of the state. While the oligarchy catered to the material welfare of the plebeians, taxing them as lightly as possible, and keeping them amused and occupied with pageants and with feste, there was always an innate feeling of discontent among the lower classes, which was capable of serving the purposes of any of the old nobility who had the capacity to utilize it.

After the closing of the Great Council, when the time had passed for successful resistance, the people seem to have at last realized their loss of position in the state.

In the beginning of 1300 Marino Bocconio, a member of the middle class, and some of his followers, presumably inspired by the old nobility, presented themselves to the Great Council for the purpose of protesting against the resolutions lately adopted. They were admitted and the doors were closed behind them. What occurred within never transpired. The next day the protestants to the number of eleven were hanged between the red columns.¹ For the moment Venice was pacified.

¹ Marino Sanudo, *Apud Muratori*, xxii. 581.

The election of Gradenigo had been brought about in no very creditable manner for the accomplishment of a single purpose. That purpose he had carried out loyally and thoroughly. In so far as he had not disappointed the expectations of his friends, his reign had been successful, but otherwise it had been singularly unfortunate. Reverse had followed reverse, and misfortune misfortune. The defeats at Aïas and in Candia, the massacre at Constantinople, and the rout at Curzola were sufficiently humiliating. But the cup of Venetian abasement ran over in the unfortunate war of Ferrara, which was brought home to every citizen by the bull of excommunication launched against the republic by Clement V.¹

The opportunity afforded the old nobility by the culminating disaster of the reign was too propitious to be ignored. The opposition, which had been quiescent for some years, became aggressive toward the close of 1309. The great majority of the opponents of the doge were content to use strictly constitutional methods, and to confine their activity to a parliamentary campaign in the Great

¹ March 27, 1309.

Council. Whatever chances of success they may have had in using the unpopularity of the government as an issue were destroyed by the precipitancy of certain of their more extreme members, who by resorting to violence unintentionally played into the hands of Gradenigo.

The Querini-Tiepolo conspiracy was the work of two men. Marco Querini was one of the leaders of the parliamentary opposition. He was a headstrong man of great ambition, the disappointment of which had embittered him and caused him to disregard what few scruples he may have had. His son-in-law, Bajamonte Tiepolo, the great-grandson and the grandson of a doge, was the son of that Giacomo Tiepolo who had lost the crown to Gradenigo because of the weakness of his character.¹ The younger Tiepolo inherited his father's instability, without the latter's self-sacrificing nature.

He was young, brilliant, and fickle, somewhat of a demagogue, worshiped by the people, who called him "Il Gran Cavalier," and thoroughly distrusted by his equals. He was reckless and extravagant in expenditure,

¹ Romanin, iii. 28, note 1.

and had been convicted of the misappropriation of public money while podestà of Modon and Coron.¹ The justice of his conviction, added to his aspirations for high office, served to make him a fit companion for Querini, his father-in-law, in the desperate enterprise that he contemplated. Associated with the two leaders, in addition to one of Querini's brothers and his son, was Badoer Badoer, who has no claim to notice but the possession of a great and historic name.

Their plans being matured, the conspirators determined to strike on the night of June 15, 1310. Badoer had been sent to Padua to enlist recruits from that disaffected city. Querini and Tiepolo with their retainers were to seize the Piazza San Marco, converging upon it from different directions, Querini by the Calle dei Fabbri and Tiepolo by the Merceria, where they were to be met by Badoer and his contingent; Gradenigo was then to be deposed and Querini proclaimed in his stead.

Marco Donato, a plebeian, who had been induced to join the plot, presumably with the hope of ennoblement, sought a safer, if

¹ Romanin, iii. 28.

less honorable, method of accomplishing his purpose by betraying the conspirators to the government.¹ Gradenigo knew of the contemplated rebellion the day before its occurrence, and was fully prepared to meet it. Badoer failed to appear upon the field of battle until all was over, and the plans of the two leaders unaccountably miscarried.

The night was rainy and Tiepolo seems to have delayed in the hope of clearing weather. When he at last reached the Piazza, Querini, who had proceeded there directly, had been defeated and killed, and the Gran Cavalier was soon heading the remnant of his little army in full retreat on the Rialto. Had both bands of insurgents reached the Piazza at the same time, the result might have been different, but as it was, Gradenigo was able to destroy them in detail, with the small force at his command, drawn from the militia of the neighboring islands. After burning the bridge of the Rialto, Tiepolo withdrew to the buildings on the other side, which he promptly fortified. The next day the doge was reinforced by the arrival of the

¹ He and his descendants were subsequently declared eligible to the Great Council. Romanin, iii. 37.

militia from Chioggia, and at nearly the same time Badoer at last appeared. He was defeated with great loss and made a prisoner.

The position which Tiepolo occupied was almost impregnable from assault. The doge was confronted with the alternative of the humiliating delay of a prolonged siege, with the necessity at its termination of beheading the most popular man in Venice or of offering terms to the rebels. He wisely chose the latter course. The terms, which were accepted and ratified by the Great Council,¹ provided that Tiepolo and such of his associates as were eligible to the Great Council should be banished to Dalmatia for four years and that all his plebeian followers should be pardoned.

The unfortunate Badoer did not fare so well. On June 18 he was tried by the Forty, put to the torture, confessed, and was sentenced to death. On June 22, the Great Council confirmed the sentence, and that evening he was beheaded. The next day almost all of his Paduan followers suffered a

¹ The vote was 361 in the affirmative, 6 in the negative, 10 not voting. Romanin, iii. 35.

like fate.¹ The Querini had been killed, and Tiepolo was the sole survivor among the leaders.

The Gran Cavalier, on his way to exile, stopped at Padua. Here he began his old game of plotting. An urgent message from the signoria determined him to accept his fate, and go to Dalmatia. He appears to have spent his life in unsuccessful efforts to organize conspiracies against Venice. He made several visits to Italy, but as often as he did so he was sent back to Dalmatia, where his exile was at least made endurable by the presence of many of the friends and supporters of his house. At last, in 1328, he died, — murdered, it was hinted, by some agent of the republic.

Taken by itself, the Querini-Tiepolo conspiracy was absolutely barren of effect. Yet it had one far-reaching result, little contemplated by its authors, which was destined to give them immortality as the unwitting cause of a new and powerful instrument in the government of the oligarchy.

¹ Those who suffered with Badoer were Guglielmo d'Este, Jacopo dei Corregliano, Acco, Giovanni, and Gerardo of Este, and Giovanni Candidi of Florence. *Continuatio chroniconum*, And. Dandolo, Apud Muratori, xii. 491.

The aristocracy had been thrown, by recent events, into a condition bordering on panic. It was generally suspected that the rebellion was far more deeply rooted than it really was. The Forty felt that until the whole matter had been thoroughly probed the ruling class could have neither peace nor quiet. Accordingly, after several tentative efforts and some debate, on July 10, 1310, a committee of public safety was created, consisting of ten members elected by the Great Council, and which, with the chiefs of the Forty, was empowered "for the purposes indicated (the inquiry into the rebellion), to spend and provide, order and act, as they may think proper, and all that may be done by them shall be considered approved, as though done by the Great Council."¹

The existence of the committee was limited to September 29, 1310. When that day arrived, its life was prolonged to November 30, when its powers were still further extended to January 30, 1311, and it was then confirmed for five years; after which, on July 20, 1335, it was declared permanent.

Thus from small beginnings was evolved

¹ Romanin, iii. 40.

the Council of Ten, which became in emergencies the real executive of the nation. Its members were elected for one year, and were immediately ineligible, no family being permitted to have more than one representative. Every month the Ten elected three of their number as *capi*, or chiefs of the Ten. With it sat the doge and the six ducal councilors, so that it really consisted of seventeen members.¹ Its authority was absolute, its deliberations were secret, and its power unlimited. It did not form a part of the regular scheme of government, for its jurisdiction was never clearly defined. It was coördinate in its powers and in crises supreme.

In 1215 King John of England granted Magna Charta to his people; nearly one hundred years later Venice organized her Council of Ten. During the period when England was beginning the evolution of popular government, Venice had seen the success of her aristocracy. Magna Charta recognized, to some extent, the individuality of the human being, and conceded certain rights, which Anglo-Saxons are in the habit of calling inalienable. The creation of the Council of

¹ Romanin, iii. 57.

Ten was the ultimate triumph of oligarchy, the elimination of the individual, and the recognition of a class, as such, distinguished from the people as a whole. That the Ten ruled ably in the interest of their class, is conceded. That the class showed wisdom in government is beyond dispute. But during the centuries of its power it never for a moment forgot that it was a distinct order in the body public, nor did it ever fail to sacrifice the interests of the many for the benefit of the few.

The first official act of the Ten was the organization of a most efficient police force,¹ which so well served its masters that for the future open disorder in the city was almost unknown. The latest disturbance was followed by nearly half a century of domestic peace. In 1313, under the doge Giovanni Soranzo, the papal interdict was removed, and on Soranzo's death in 1328 the coronation oath was modified to forbid the crown to summon the Arengo without the concurrence of the college, except in matters of purely ecclesiastical cognizance.²

¹ Romanin, iii. 41.

² Romanin, iii. 107.

CHAPTER IX

MARINO FALIER

ON September 11, 1354, Marino Falier was elected doge as the successor of Andrea Dandolo. Although much has been written about Falier and the abortive conspiracy that bears his name, so little is really known of the motives that actuated him in his efforts to overthrow the oligarchy, that it will always remain to some extent one of the mysteries of history.

At the time of his election Falier was seventy-six years of age. He belonged to the old nobility, his house having already given two doges to Venice. It traced its pedigree in an unbroken line to the maritime tribunes of the sixth century.

As early as 1312 Falier had been one of the electors of the doge Soranzo. Since then he had filled almost every magisterial and diplomatic office in the gift of the government. His victory over the Hungarians near

Zara in 1346, entitled him to rank as one of the greatest soldiers the republic had produced. He had received knighthood from Charles IV., and he held the title of count by virtue of the feoff of Valdemarino which had been conferred upon him by the bishop of Ceneda.

The story that has come down to us of his seven months' reign has been transmitted by hands that were inimical and of necessity prejudiced. That he was arrogant and fiery is not a sufficient explanation of what he did. Arrogance and fire he doubtless possessed, for he belonged to the oldest aristocracy, and moreover he was an Italian. The facts, as history tells them, are meagre enough. At a ball given by the dogaressa on Carnival Thursday, April 2, 1355, Michele Steno misbehaved himself, much to the indignation of the doge, who ordered him from the palace. Steno always claimed that he had been unjustly treated. Be that as it may, the future doge was without justification for his subsequent conduct.

As he was passing through one of Falier's private apartments, he pinned to the ducal chair a paper on which were written certain

words reflecting on the honor of the doge.¹ Steno was arrested, tried by the Forty, and sentenced to eight weeks' imprisonment and a year's exile. The doge was thoroughly dissatisfied with the leniency of the punishment, and ignoring the offender's youth — he was only twenty-four — demanded either his death or perpetual exile. The Council of Ten declined to interfere, and Steno was permitted to serve his sentence, and eventually became a most distinguished citizen and able chief magistrate of the republic.

The next day it happened that Marco Barbaro, a noble, as the result of an altercation, struck the admiral or foreman of the arsenal, Stefano Ghiazza.² The latter at once carried his grievance to the doge, in whom he found a most sympathetic auditor. "How can I obtain justice for you, when it is denied to me?" Falier is reported to have exclaimed. To which the foreman replied, "But we bind wild beasts, and if we cannot bind them, we kill them."³ An understanding having been

¹ "Marin Falier dalla bella mujer, lu la mantien e altri la galde." Romanin, iii. 182, note 1.

² The name of Ghiazza does not appear upon the records of the Ten. Romanin, iii. 183, note 3.

³ Romanin, iii. 184.

established between the patrician and the plebeian, ways and means for binding the wild beasts were at once concerted.

Falier induced his nephew, Bertucci, to join him, while Ghiazza secured the adherence of his son-in-law, Bertucci Israello, a sailor; Filippo Calendario, the superintendent and architect of the ducal palace; Beltrame di Bergamo, a furrier; and about a dozen more. Each of the conspirators agreed to produce forty others, and it was decided that on the 15th the blow should be struck. The doge undertook that the great bell in the Campanile should be rung at the agreed hour, and that a report should be spread that the Genoese were approaching the city. The conspirators were to be in readiness, and as the nobles appeared to learn the cause of the excitement they were to be stabbed by the supporters of the doge, who was thereupon to proclaim a new constitution giving him autocratic power.

Unfortunately for the success of the venture Beltrame had a noble patron, Nicolò Lioni, whose life he was anxious to save. Lioni, not being satisfied with the furrier's vague hints, had no difficulty in obtaining

from him a complete confession. The Council of Ten was at once called together and the minor conspirators were arrested. On the same day, the architect, Calendario, his son-in-law, and seven others were hanged from the windows of the palace, Bertucci Falier was imprisoned, and Nicoletto Calendario banished for life.

On April 16, 1355, the doge was tried by the Ten, and a zonta added for the occasion. Concealment was useless, and Falier made a complete confession. The next morning he was beheaded on the landing of what is now known as the Scala d' Oro, having, according to his enemies, first conceded the justice of his punishment.¹ He was buried in the chapel of Santa Maria della Pace, at the Scuola San Marco. Not many years ago his tomb was opened and was found to contain a skeleton with the severed head between its knees. But the bones of Marino Falier were not permitted to rest in peace. They were literally thrown away, and his sarcophagus, the inscription having first been chiseled off, was turned into a kitchen sink.²

¹ Romanin, iii. 190.

² Guida artistica e Storica di Venezia, per P. Selvatico e V. Lazari, Venezia, 1852, 118.

If the chroniclers of the day are to be believed, a doge of Venice of the highest lineage and spotless fame, with at best only a few more years before him, with everything to lose if he failed, was willing to risk all, name, fortune, fame, and life itself, for the gratification of a spite that was almost childish in its petulance. Marino Falier's record as a man, as a soldier, and as a statesman, of itself stamps such a contention as absurd. As it was not for a moment claimed that he was otherwise than in full possession of his great intellectual powers, another explanation must be sought for his apparently desperate undertaking.

Although the new nobility was in control of the government, such as remained of the old houses considered themselves made of finer clay than the new men, who had by the mere force of numbers and of wealth, and by superior finesse relegated them to comparative obscurity. Falier's origin made him despise the ruling class to which he belonged. He was in much the same position as a member of the *ancienne noblesse* of France who has rallied to the republic, and has accepted public office.

He was twenty-one years of age at the time of the closing of the Great Council. He had seen the ineffectual parliamentary protest that had been made against that *coup d'état*, by the members of families as old as his own. He had lived through the conspiracies of Bocconio, and of Querini and Tiepolo, the one inspired, the other openly directed by men to whom he was bound by the strongest ties, long friendship and exclusive caste feeling. Most of his public career had been passed in positions of independent responsibility, at a distance from Venice, the influence of whose oligarchy he had only felt as hampering his initiative in serving the state.

It is more than likely that through the long years of his public activity he had chafed under the oppression of those whom he regarded as his inferiors, and only awaited an opportunity of endeavoring to break their power. It does not necessarily follow that Falier was in advance of his time in a fondness for popular liberty. It is, however, altogether probable that his hatred of the oligarchy was the growth of years, and not of a day, and that in scheming to destroy it he would naturally turn to the then only known

remedy for the oppression of the nobles, — a benevolent despotism founded upon the support of the people.

When at length the longed-for opportunity presented itself in his election to the throne, he was too old to profit personally by any constitutional changes. As he had everything to lose by revolution, he had absolutely nothing selfish to gain. The subordinates with whom he had surrounded himself would certainly suggest premeditation in his method of procedure. It is incredible that, during a first interview, he should have thrown himself unreservedly into the power of an unknown man, as tradition describes the foreman of the arsenal to have been. Ghiazza and Calendario were the two men in all Venice most useful to Falier's purpose. Ghiazza commanded some ten thousand laborers, of all kinds, employed at the arsenal, enlisted and organized as soldiers,¹ and was most popular with the people;² while Calendario, as superintendent of the ducal palace, had under him the laborers employed on public works.

¹ *La Vie d'un Patricien de Venise*, par Charles Yriarte, Paris, 1874, 304.

² "Uomo in grande credito tra il popolo." Romanin, iii. 183.

These two men, in short, controlled directly almost all the laborers in the public service. Their adhesion meant the support of nearly all the plebeians of Venice.

Whether the incident of the carnival ball had any influence on the course of the conspiracy we have no means of knowing. It may have forced the doge's hand and hastened the consummation of his scheme. Had Falier succeeded, he would without doubt have restored the old nobility to power at the expense of the newer aristocracy, but the power so regained could only have been maintained by restoring the people to their former share in government and by supporting them in their aspirations for liberty.

The conspiracy of Marino Falier was the last organized from within Venice that was destined to disturb the tranquillity of the ruling class, for the effort of Francesco Balduino in 1412 was a mere flash in the pan. Falier was beheaded, and with him died the final hope of popular government in Venice. His portrait in the hall of the Great Council was painted out, and across the black surface of the empty space were written the words which all may read to-day, "Hic est

locus Marini Faletro, decapitato pro criminibus."

Of all the efforts that were made to overthrow the oligarchy, that of Falier was the most important. It was led by the ablest Venetian of his day, and had behind it the great mass of the Venetian people. As it was suppressed in embryo, it has never received the attention given the more spectacular Querini-Tiepolo fiasco, but had Falier been afforded the opportunity of the Gran Cavalier, there can be little question but that he would have succeeded.

The date of his death marks the apogee of the power of the oligarchy. But few changes were made thereafter in the constitution. In 1423 the Arengo, which had long since ceased to exist except in name, was formally abolished,¹ and with it disappeared the last vestige of popular government.

The death of Falier marked the passing of the generation that had closed the Great Council. The men who were now in power had never known a time when the present constitution had not been in force. To them it was the only possible form of government.

¹ Romanin, iv. 66.

The devotion of the nobles to their caste became the ruling passion of their lives. For them Venice meant the aristocracy, and for Venice they were ready to do, and dare, and die. Self was forgotten and ambition put aside. The chivalry of the North, with its devotion to chosen lady or to king, gave place in Venice to an equally intense affection for the state. In the heroic days of Venice, she was to her children the one ideal object of their best endeavors and their profoundest love. And well it was for Venice that her constitution was strong and her people devoted, for she was presently to pass through trials that were to shake her very foundations, and would have destroyed a weaker government.

MARIST FATHERS
PAULINA - LA

CHAPTER X

THE WAR OF CHIOGGIA

THE growth of Venice in power and in wealth, the necessity of finding new markets for her merchants and new outlets for her activity, had embarked her almost unwittingly, and perhaps unwillingly, on a policy of territorial expansion which was destined eventually to be a factor in her undoing. Because of her situation Venice was well-nigh impregnable. With modern artillery undreamed of, as long as she controlled the Adriatic she had nothing to fear from Italy. The intricacies of lagoon navigation rendered her immune from assault from the mainland, while, thanks to the inexhaustible supplies she could draw from her Dalmatian and Istrian possessions, all the armies of Christendom encamped upon her shores could not starve her into submission. She was mighty in her isolation, and unconquerable as long as she could and did place her reliance upon

her sea power, as long as she was content with a compact and contiguous territory within her reach and within her power to defend, as long as she was willing to steer clear of the entanglements of Italian politics.

The suzerainty that she had acquired over Fano in 1141,¹ while in a sense her first acquisition of power upon the mainland, was more in the nature of an exclusive commercial treaty than of actual possession. It was not until the beginning of the fourteenth century that she was first seized with the land-lust of the other states of Europe.

In 1308, the doge Pietro Gradenigo, in urging the war with Ferrara, voiced the cant of "expansionists" and land-robbers of all ages, when he said, "It is the duty of a good prince and a good citizen to increase the state and to enlarge the republic, and by every way and in every manner to increase the welfare and the authority and the glory of the Fatherland; favorable opportunities occur rarely, and wise men know how to take advantage of them even before they are fully developed, while only imprudent men and fools fail to see them, or seeing, do not know

¹ And. Dandolo, *Apud Muratori*, xii. 279.

how to use them ; children are frightened by words, but valiant and spirited men ought not to fear even the sword's point." ¹

The result of his speech was the disastrous second war of Ferrara, when Venice, vainly opposing the pope, was forced to sue for peace, and to recover her commercial privileges with the Ferrarese by the payment of an indemnity to the Holy See.² In 1329, the republic, still following her new ambition, declared war against Can Grande della Scala, lord of Verona. Fortunately for her purposes, she was not obliged to fight the Great Dog single-handed, for Florence, and the lords of Parma, Milan, and Mantua came to her aid.

Marsilio di Carrara, who had been deposed from the lordship of Padua by Can Grande, had entered into the service of his conqueror as governor of that city, and was sent by Scala, who realized that the defeat of the league was beyond his powers, to negotiate a peace with Venice. Carrara at once proceeded to betray his master, and the republic

¹ Barbaro Cronaca, xcii. cl. 7, quoted by Romanin, iii. 15 and 16.

² In 1312. Caroldo, quoted by Romanin, iii. 23.

agreed that as the price of his treason Padua should be returned to him. Padua was surrendered and Can Grande sued for peace. By the terms of the peace Venice received her first mainland possession, the province of Treviso. The policy of Gradenigo had been followed to the letter, for she had seized the first opportunity that had presented itself for territorial expansion.

Possessions on the mainland having been once obtained, Venice was confronted with a problem absolutely new in her experience. She had become a member of the family of Italian states, with all the responsibilities and dangers that membership entailed. She no longer found her sea power sufficient for her defense, for she now had a land frontier which required constant care and unceasing vigilance. Essentially a maritime people, the Venetian spirit never took kindly to land warfare. In protecting her new possessions she had two courses open to her : either to do the work herself by means of an elaborate system of fortifications and an extensive mercenary force ; or to have the work done by another. She chose the latter plan, and hoped to accomplish her purpose by creating

a buffer state between her possessions and the rest of Italy of sufficient strength to defend her frontier, and of sufficient devotion to her interests to insure loyalty. Accordingly, in pursuance of the terms made with Carrara, she placed him as her tool upon the throne of Padua, while to his brother Ubertino were given Bassano and Castelfalco.¹

Francesco Carrara, who succeeded to the lordship of Padua on the death of his father, Marsilio, was, like all his race, unscrupulous, ungrateful, and ambitious. He was utterly disloyal to his benefactress, Venice, and hoped to obtain independence and power by her undoing. Had he been dealing with an individual, he might have succeeded; unhappily for him, he had to contend with a system that never swerved from its purpose and never forgave an attempt to block its ambitions.

In 1356 Louis of Hungary, urged on by Carrara, declared war against the republic, and after a series of brilliant successes was able to dictate his own terms of peace. He restored Treviso to Venice, but on condition

¹ Romanin, iii. 129.

that she should surrender all right and claim to Dalmatia and almost the entire coast-line from Quarnero to Durazzo, and should recall her consuls.¹ The first crop of Gradenigo's planting had indeed been harvested. After three hundred and fifty years of possession, Venice lost her most valuable provinces, which had cost her vast treasure and numberless lives to retain, in exchange for what amounted to little more than the poor privilege of fighting for her very existence on the mainland. In 1373 the same allies again took the field, but this time Venice was more successful, and having captured Louis's nephew, the Hungarian king withdrew from Carrara's support as the price of his nephew's liberty. Carrara unaided was obliged to accept humiliating terms upon his surrender.

The conquests of Venice in the Adriatic and in the Levant, culminating in the Fourth Crusade, had placed her in nominal possession of an almost unbroken line of colonies, from Venice to Constantinople, including Candia and many of the islands of the Archipelago. But her title to these possessions had constantly to be upheld against all comers. Her

¹ Marino Sanudo, *Apud Muratori*, xxii. 651.

rivalry with Genoa in the control of the Eastern trade brought about the needless and fratricidal duel which destroyed one of the combatants, and by weakening the other permitted the Turk to obtain a foothold in Christendom. The Genoese were worsted in 1218 and again in 1258.

In 1261 the Latin Empire fell before the Greeks, and the Venetian podesta and patriarch were driven from Constantinople. In 1264 the Venetian admiral, Giacomo Dandolo, destroyed the Genoese fleet, under Lanfranco Borborino, at Trapani. The restoration of Venetian commercial privileges at Constantinople followed.

When Tripoli and Acre were captured by the Moslem in 1289, Venice at once negotiated commercial treaties with the all-conquering Turk to the exclusion of Genoa. War with the latter resulted, and Venice was overwhelmed at Curzola in 1298. In 1353 the rivals met once more, and the following year the elder Pisani was defeated at Sapienza. The Duke of Milan, who had arranged the peace of 1355, again offered his services, and was again successful. The peace which followed lasted for twenty years, when,

owing to complications over the possession of Tenedos, hostilities once more became inevitable.

In 1378 the long and intermittent war with Genoa culminated in the final death-struggle between the two republics. Carrara at once joined Genoa and Hungary promised its support to the allies. Against this powerful combination Venice was obliged to contend practically single-handed, for the net result of her alliance with Peter IV. of Aragon, and Barnabo Visconti, of Milan, was the insignificant force of 200 cavalry and 500 infantry sent by the latter to her aid.¹ She at once mobilized her fleet, and placed Vettore Pisani in supreme command, while Carlo Zeno was sent with a flying squadron to Negropont.

Pisani sailed for Genoese waters and on May 30, off Cape Antium, met a squadron of the enemy which he completely defeated. He then took Cattaro and Sebenico, and on orders from the Senate, but against his own judgment, wintered at Pola. Here on May 7, 1379, he was discovered by the Genoese and utterly defeated. On returning to Venice

¹ Romanin, iii. 262 and note 2.

with only a remnant of six galleys left from the fleet with which he had sailed a year before, Pisani was tried for the loss of his fleet and sentenced to six months' imprisonment and deprivation of the right to hold office for five years.

Meanwhile the Genoese admiral, Pietro Doria, who had been cruising off the Lido, attacked Chioggia, and on August 16 the town surrendered. Venice was now surrounded by her enemies. Carrara, who had forced Visconti to make a truce,¹ blocked her on the land side, while Doria held Chioggia. In their extremity the authorities yielded to the clamor of the sailors of the fleet and restored Pisani to his command.² The admiral, acting under the nominal orders of the doge, Andrea Contarini, instituted a blockade and siege of Chioggia, thus turning the tables on the Genoese, who depended on the mainland for provisions which were supplied by Carrara.

Soon after the advent of the Genoese, Carlo Zeno had been sent for, but did not arrive until January 1, when the situation of the

¹ Romanin, iii. 266.

² Marino Sanudo, *Apud* Muratori, xxii. 691.

republic was growing desperate. Its credit was almost exhausted, its inhabitants were on the verge of starvation, and it was only the splendid fortitude of the ruling class that prevented the failure of the siege of Chioggia.¹ On June 24, 1380, the town surrendered at discretion. The result of the war of Chioggia was an immediate triumph for Venice, but the ultimate effect was disastrous to Italy and to the republic herself. Genoa never recovered, and Venice was left to fight the Ottoman single-handed, a task that eventually became too great for even her vast resources.

While Venice had triumphed over Genoa, Carrara still remained to be reckoned with. The lord of Padua was only prevented from capturing Treviso by its transfer from Venice to Austria. All parties to the war were thoroughly exhausted, and were glad to accept the mediation of the Duke of Savoy.

¹ Romanin, iii. 276 *et seq.*, and Daru, ii. 76.

CHAPTER XI

ON THE MAINLAND

THE effacement of Genoa left Venice for a time a free hand in the East, where her interests prospered. On the mainland conditions were far from propitious.

In 1386 Carrara had bought back Treviso, Ceneda, Feltre, and Belluno from the Duke of Austria, for a hundred thousand ducats,¹ and by their possession was able to control one of the great commercial routes into Germany. Not satisfied with the rule of all the territory between the Alps and the lagoon, his ambition prompted him, very unfortunately, as it subsequently proved, to join with Visconti in an attempt to partition the possessions of the Scalas.

The lord of Milan merely used Carrara as a catspaw to draw his chestnuts from the fire, and the latter soon found that, having helped to subdue Verona and Vicenza, he

¹ Romanin, iii. 317.

was himself destined to be absorbed by his powerful and unscrupulous ally. After an unsuccessful appeal for help to Venice, who had gone over to Visconti on the recession of Treviso, Ceneda, Feltre, and Belluno, which, to prevent capture by the republic, he had ceded to the lord of Milan,¹ Francesco Carrara abdicated in favor of his son, Francesco Novello.

If Francesco Carrara had hoped to mollify Venice by his renunciation of power, he had mistaken his enemy. The republic not only permitted the two Carraresi to be imprisoned, but allowed Visconti to occupy Padua without protest. Her policy on the mainland was, if possible, to keep the Carraresi at Padua as a buffer between the republic and her powerful neighbor of Milan. Accordingly, having permitted Francesco Novello to learn the lesson of adversity, the republic supported him in his successful effort to regain his patrimony.

Had the Carraresi been loyal to Venice, they might have remained in control of Padua for an indefinite period. In 1402 Gian Galeazzo Visconti died, and his possessions

¹ Romanin, iii. 322.

were divided among his three sons. The desire of Gian Galeazzo for the acquisition of Padua, had served to preserve Carrara's faith to Venice; but the strong hand of Visconti being removed, Francesco Novello threw off the mask, and attempted to thwart Venice in her efforts to increase her territory in the direction of Milan. War followed, and in due course Padua fell.

Francesco Novello and his two sons were taken to Venice as prisoners. Although they had played fast and loose with the republic, and had shown themselves incapable of gratitude and of honor, although they had never hesitated to betray their patroness when it served their purpose, and had even been detected in a plot to murder the members of the Senate who were unfriendly to them, it is unlikely that they would have been treated with unusual severity had it not been for certain discoveries made soon after their capture.¹

It was found that a gigantic conspiracy had been organized in the city itself by Carrara's agents for the overthrow of the republic. Some of the highest officers of the

¹ Romanin, iv. 34 *et seq.*

government were implicated. Two Venetian nobles, Pietro Pisani and Jacopo Gradenigo, were convicted as accessories and sentenced to terms of imprisonment, a number of plebeians were executed for being in Carrara's pay, and even Carlo Zeno, the hero of Chioggia, was imprisoned for having received money from the same source.¹ Although it was not proved that Zeno had taken part in the conspiracy, it is a curious commentary on the times that a great Venetian patriot, who had been a candidate for the corno in 1382, should have been willing to correspond with, and accept money from, the enemy of his country. At last when no further doubt existed in the minds of the Ten as to the guilt of the Carraresi, they were tried, found guilty, and January 17, 1406, strangled in prison.

The Carraresi died not because they had fought the republic in the field, but because they had undertaken a most despicable conspiracy for her destruction. It may be said, in excuse of their conduct, that they made use of the weapons of the age. Granting that this was so, they knew the risk they ran, and

¹ Four hundred ducats, Romanin, iv. 42.

if their lives paid the forfeit, it was nothing more than the just price of failure.¹

The extinction of the Carraresi left Venice in possession of the territory between the Alps and the lagoon. Her policy of maintaining on her frontier a buffer state had proved impracticable. Henceforth she found herself in control of large provinces on the mainland, which she was obliged to defend with her own arms and at her own cost.

On December 26, 1413, died Michele Steno, the doge who had fifty-nine years before inadvertently brought to its climax the conspiracy of Marino Falier. Despite the wildness of his youth, Steno had served the oligarchy ably and faithfully. His reign of thirteen years had been fraught with momentous consequences for the republic. It had seen the destruction of the Carraresi, the acquisition of Padua, Vicenza, and Verona,² and the recovery of Treviso upon the mainland; and what was far more to the true interests of Venice, the restoration of Dalmatia to Venetian rule,

¹ Daru, ii. 172, is almost alone among historians in considering the execution of the Carraresi a judicial murder. There is great unanimity of opinion that they received no more than their just deserts.

² 1406.

on June 9, 1409. During the last year of his life, on August 24, 1413, the Venetian army, under Pandolfo Malatesta¹ of Brescia, gained at Motta a decisive victory over the army of the emperor Sigismund, commanded by Filippo degli Scolari, which was followed by a five years' truce. When Steno passed away, Venice was at peace and in fair way of regaining the prestige of which recent years had deprived her.

His successor, Tommaso Mocenigo, was elected January 7, 1414. Mocenigo was the last doge whose election received the sanction of the Arengo. After his time the choice of the electoral college was announced to the people, but not even the nominal consent of the governed was ever again asked. Mocenigo belonged to the rapidly disappearing school of anti-imperialists, who had been sneered at by Gradenigo, nearly two hundred years earlier, as "imprudent men and fools," as "children who are frightened by words." He believed that the true policy of the republic lay in avoiding as far as possible the entanglements of Italian politics, and that her surest path to greatness lay in peace

¹ Romanin, iv. 61.

with her neighbors and the prosperity of her commerce. He constantly endeavored to enforce his principles as much as he was permitted by the narrow limitations of his authority. He preferred the risk of unpopularity to the easier rôle of imperiling the interests of his country for the applause of the moment.

Yet, by the irony of fate, under his leadership Venice was almost constantly engaged in war. In 1416 Venice for the first time joined issue with the Turks, whose fleet she almost annihilated in the victory of Gallipoli. In 1418 the emperor Sigismund, who had entered Friuli at the head of his army, was worsted, and Venice acquired that province. In 1420 the republic extended and consolidated her possessions in Dalmatia and Istria, while in 1422 Corinth was ceded to her and she regained her lost domains in Albania.

In 1422 Venice entered into a defensive alliance, for ten years, with Filippo Maria Visconti,¹ who had inherited much of his father's genius, which he had used in recovering his lost possessions. The house of Visconti, under the leadership of its new head,

¹ Romanin, iv. 88.

was rapidly regaining its position as one of the most powerful in Italy. Whether rightly or not, Florence feared that it would only be a question of time when her turn would come for absorption by the lord of Milan. Acting under this apprehension, she tried to induce Venice to break her alliance with Visconti. On March 30, 1423, a communication reached the signoria from Florence, in which the latter offered to mediate between Venice and the emperor, for the purpose of obviating the Milanese-Venetian alliance.

The proposition was submitted to the senate and advocated by the procurator, Francesco Foscari. The doge himself led the opposition in a speech which has come down to us in so evidently altered a form as to suggest that the version which we possess may be entirely apocryphal.¹ Such was the personal influence of Mocenigo that the senate agreed with him and declined the Florentine proposal. This was the last political act of the doge, who fully realized at the time that he was a dying man. A few days before the end, Mocenigo summoned to his bedside the chief officers of the republic, and read to

¹ Marino Sanudo, *Apud Muratori*, xxii. 946.

them, or what is more likely had read to them, a document which was of the nature of a political testament. We have it in several slightly different versions, but its authenticity is undoubted.¹

It is the pathetic and eloquent plea for peace of a dying patriot who clearly foresaw the dangers which menaced his country. The doge states the commercial and financial condition of Venice,² urges his hearers to be careful in the selection of his successor, and warns them against the arch jingo, Francesco Foscari, and sums up the whole anti-imperialist position in one sentence: "For my satisfaction," he says, "I desire to recommend to your care this Christian city, to urge you to love your neighbors, and to act justly to them, and to preserve peace, as I have tried to do."

A few days later, on April 4, 1423, Tommaso Mocenigo died, and with him passed away the old order of conservatism. With Mocenigo's death his influence ended, for

¹ Marino Sanudo, *Apud Muratori*, xxii. 958; *Romanin* (iv. 93 *et seq.*) prefers and uses the version which he found in the archives of the Donà family.

² Tabulated in Antonio Quadri, *Storia della Statistica*, tavola A.

on April 15, 1423, was elected, as his successor, that Francesco Foscari against whom he had so vigorously warned the republic.

Francesco Foscari enjoyed the invidious distinction of being the first doge chosen by the direct bribery of the electorate. A class of pauper nobles existed whom Foscari was accused, without denial, of having bribed with an unappropriated fund which had been at his disposal when he was procurator of San Marco.¹ The charge was made, accepted as true, laughed at, and allowed to drop.

On the accession of the new doge, the official designation of the republic was changed from "Comune Venetiarum" to "Signoria," and the Arengo was definitely and finally abolished.² With Foscari Venice embarked upon the policy which resulted in the formation of the League of Cambrai. She had crowned the summit of her greatness, and had begun the descent which was to lead to her grave.

¹ Romanin, iv. 96.

² Romanin, iv. 98.

CHAPTER XII

IMPERIALISM

THE jingo party, having obtained control of the government, lost no time in accepting an alliance with Florence against Visconti.¹ The senate was chiefly influenced to this course by an interview that the doge had had with Francesco Carmagnola.² This famous condottiere had been in the employ of Visconti, and having quarreled with his master, had left the service of Milan, and was seeking employment wherever he could find it. Venice did not understand the trade of which Carmagnola was a craftsman, nor did the latter, until too late, understand Venice.

With her entrance into the family of Italian states, Venice had assumed the hitherto unknown necessity of maintaining armies for her defense. A perplexing business she found it; for in the fifteenth century national armies

¹ December 3, 1425. Romanin, iv. 110.

² Romanin, iv. 107.

were unknown. Fighting was the trade of mercenaries, organized by condottieri, who sold their services to the highest bidder. As a game played by professionals, war lacked both the ardor and the enthusiasm that come from fighting for flag and country. As every condottiere of repute changed sides as willingly as he changed his coat, it was essential for his future prosperity that if possible a good understanding be constantly maintained with the enemy. Loyalty and allegiance became a mere matter of pay, to be thrown off the moment the employer's exchequer was exhausted. Wars were protracted as long as pay continued. Strategy was dead, and the tactics employed by these so-called soldiers savored far more of *opéra bouffe* than of warfare. It was not until the military spirit of Julius Cæsar lived again in Gustavus Adolphus that the man of science displaced the condottiere.

Venice took the game of war far too seriously to suit its professors. That she should require her condottieri to strike swiftly and decisively, that she should demand of them definite results, and protest vigorously against the exchange of prisoners after what the

rules of warfare called a victory, shocked the amateurs of the period. But Venice was nothing if not original, as her first great condottiere found to his cost. The republic was the most generous paymaster in Italy, and so soldiers of fortune were always to be found who were willing to serve her, even in humoring what to them were her eccentricities, as displayed in the case of Carmagnola.

The services of Carmagnola were retained, and war was declared against the tyrant of Milan.¹ The history of the war with Visconti is the usual story of mercenary operations. It dragged on interminably. Occasionally the Venetian general obtained some slight success, occasionally he met with slight reverses. When the republic grew impatient, a victory was gained, almost as though to order, but immediately after a success the prisoners were released and permitted to take up arms again, and Venice was no better off than before. Whenever the Venetian army occupied a strategic position that required the annihilation of the enemy, Carmagnola, on the plea of old wounds, withdrew to take

¹ February 19, 1426. Romanin, iv. 114.

the cure at his favorite health resort, the baths of Abano.

At last the patience of the government was exhausted. Carmagnola had made no concealment of the fact that he had preserved a perfectly good understanding with Visconti.¹ His procrastination was intolerable, and his exactions unlimited. There was no doubt but that despite the honors and the pecuniary rewards that had been heaped upon him, he was false to his employer, and ready, whenever it might suit his convenience, to go over to Visconti.

Carmagnola was therefore enticed to Venice, where he was hurried to prison, tried, convicted, sentenced to death, and beheaded between the red columns.² He was probably no worse than his fellow soldiers of fortune, but he lacked the tact to appreciate the temper of Venice. He tried her patience beyond the breaking-point, and suffered the penalty of his stupidity.

The war with Milan still languished. Condottiere succeeded condottiere. Gian Francesco Gonzaga and Gattamelata played the game no more successfully than had Car-

¹ Romanin, iv. 138.

² Sabellico, 332.

magnola, but they were able to keep the good will of the republic, for, appreciating the generosity of their patroness, they were at least true to their salt. Francesco Sforza, the greatest of all the free companions of the period, served sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other. Having married Bianca, daughter of Filippo Maria Visconti, he was strong enough on the death of his father-in-law to seize the throne of Milan, and become the arbiter of North Italian politics.¹

On April 9, 1454, was concluded the Peace of Lodi, by which Brescia and Bergamo were restored to Venice and Crema ceded to her. A defensive alliance followed between Venice, Florence, and Sforza, and for the moment northern Italy was at peace.

On October 24, 1457, the thirty-four years' reign of Francesco Foscari came to an end. Under him Venice had grown more splendid, and more vulnerable ; she had acquired more territory and more weakness. He had found her solvent, and left her with credit impaired. He debauched the nobility and bought the throne by bribery and corruption ; when he

¹ March 26, 1450. Romanin, iv. 222.

left it he did so unregretted and took with him a broken heart.

Much sympathy has been wasted upon the cause of his undoing, — his son Jacopo. In 1444 Jacopo Foscari was accused of selling his influence with the head of the state, and having escaped from Venice, his trial proceeded in his absence. In his apartments was found a box containing presents which he had received and documents which left no doubt of his guilt. The Ten banished him to Nauplia, but he was permitted to remain in Triest, where he had taken refuge.¹ Throughout the whole wretched story the Ten seem to have behaved with remarkable lenience to a miscreant who was as sordid and as mean as the lowest pick-pocket, without the excuse of want for his crimes.

It was discovered that Francesco Sforza, then in the employ of Visconti, had sent Jacopo Foscari a chest of money and plate, which Jacopo had accepted, and the Ten ignored the crime. In 1447, at the request of the doge, Jacopo was pardoned and allowed to return to Venice, where he seems to have

¹ Romanin, iv. 270.

passed three years of comparative respectability.¹

On December 5, 1450, Ermolao Donato, a chief of the Ten at the time of Jacopo Foscari's first trial, was murdered. The next month Jacopo was accused of the crime. Although there was no direct evidence adduced at the trial, there was a clear presumption of his guilt, and again the Ten showed lenience. The prisoner was banished to Crete "where he continued to reside at his villa, at Canea, in the enjoyment of personal liberty and many indulgences,"² provided always that he kept his parol. But Foscari did not keep his parol, for in 1456 he was once more accused, this time of having appealed to Sforza, then Duke of Milan, to intercede in his behalf with the signoria, and of having implored the sultan to rescue him from the place of his banishment. Foscari was brought back to Venice, where he made a full confession.³ Once again the Ten were merciful, Jacopo was sent back to Crete, there to be imprisoned for a year. It is probable that even this light punishment would have

¹ Romanin, iv. 273.

² Hazlitt, ii. 113.

³ Romanin, iv. 284, according to whom Foscari was not put to the torture.

been remitted¹ had he not died soon after reaching the place of banishment.

The doge was an old and feeble man; the misfortunes of his son were more than his advanced age and impaired health could stand. He withdrew from public life and shut himself up in his private apartments, where he abandoned himself to his grief. There were certain official acts to which it was absolutely necessary to obtain the signature of the crown. Foscari declined to transact any business and threw public affairs into chaos. After bearing with the old man for eleven months, the Ten urged him to resume the functions of his office. The doge declined to do so and refused to listen to a hint that his resignation would be acceptable.

On October 22, when the doge had been officially absent for fifteen months, a zonta consisting of the Ten, the doge's council, and twenty-five additional nobles formally demanded his abdication. Again Foscari refused. He was then given eight days in which to leave the palace, and bowing to the inevitable surrendered the crown. Three days later he was dead.

¹ Romanin, iv. 286.

Shorn of the romance of history, the story of the two Foscari is sordid enough except for the capacity of forbearance it reveals in the committee of Ten. The younger was a bribe-taker and a scoundrel, who, because of the influence of his father, never received his just deserts. The elder was a bribe-giver and a corruptionist, who during his long administration did more to injure his country than any of his predecessors; and at its close, abandoning himself to his private grief, utterly forgot the responsibilities of his office. The opportunity was given him of retiring gracefully from the throne. As he obstinately declined to do so, the interests of the republic, which were superior to the feelings of any individual, left the oligarchy no other course than to depose him.

CHAPTER XIII

THE COST OF EMPIRE

ALTHOUGH Venice had in a desultory way taken part, from time to time during the fourteenth century, in expeditions against the Turks, it was not until 1416 that she seriously tried conclusions with them. In that year the victory of Pietro Loredan at Gallipoli was followed by a treaty of peace with the sultan, which was most advantageous to the republic and endured until 1453, when the Ozmanli entered the Byzantine capital, and the rule of the cross passed from Constantinople forever.

The attitude of Venice to the Turk had been different from that of any other power. She had never entered into operations against the Infidel with anything but half-hearted enthusiasm, for she had found the Moslem one of her best customers, with quite as much humanity as, and more business rectitude than, many of the Christian states. She was,

besides, inclined to view his growing power as rather to her advantage, for it afforded a balance in the East to the ever increasing might of Hungary.

If Venice was destined to pay a heavier price for the loss of Constantinople than did any other nation, it was no more than she deserved for her policy of two hundred years earlier. The events of 1204, through her instrumentality, placed the republic under responsibilities which, in her own interests as well as in those of civilization, she should have been willing to assume. Had Venice removed her capital to the Bosphorus, as was proposed, in 1208, she would only have followed to their logical conclusions the obligations she had incurred. What she tried to do was to profit from the situation she had created, without paying the cost of its creation.

Had she substituted for the Greek emperors a strong and vigorous as well as a compact state, the Latin Empire might have lived and the history of European Turkey never have been written. But the power she erected at Constantinople was weak, inefficient, and torn asunder by internal dissensions. Though Byzantine emperors had ruled over a crumbling

ruin, it still possessed some remains of its original strength, which, in all human probability, would have successfully resisted the Moslem.

The Latin emperors of the East ruled over a house of cards, which from the very nature of its construction, upon the appearance of the first storm, was bound to come tumbling about their ears. The Greek emperors who followed were no improvement. Had they been properly supported, they might have relieved Venice of the necessity of being crushed between the upper and the nether millstones. Venice, in after years, complained bitterly that she was left by Europe to oppose the Turk single-handed,¹ yet when Constantinople was besieged by the Ottoman and called piteously upon her for help, she gave nothing but good wishes and advice. The Venetian, as well as the Genoese residents of the doomed city, bore their part nobly in its defense; and when after its fall it was given over to sack and pillage, they died like men at their posts. But the republic permitted the crescent to be planted in Europe without any effective protest, and

¹ Romanin, iv. 236.

was, to the scandal of Christendom, the first power to enter into a treaty of amity and commerce with the conqueror.¹

The Turk once established at Constantino-ple, with the evident purpose of disputing with Venice the mastery of the sea, there were only two possible courses to safety open to the republic: either to join him in an effort to conquer and partition eastern Europe or to fight him unrelentingly until one or the other succumbed. If she had adopted the first alternative, it is doubtful if any combination possible at that day could have prevented its success. If, on the other hand, what lingering religious scruples she may have had deterred her from joining hands with the Infidel, then her only possible salvation lay in a relentless war of extermination. She might have been the loser, but had she lost, she would only have antedated her destruction by some two centuries, while had she won, she would have established herself as the greatest power of Christendom.

Venice, however, was jealous of the growing power of Hungary, and, until too late,

¹ April 18, 1454, *Trattato di Pace con Mohammed II. Romanin*, iv. doc. 7, 528, also 248 *et seq.*

tried to use the Ottoman to check the rising danger across the Adriatic. She temporized, and her opportunity escaped her, never to return. Strictly commercial in all her operations, she saw no adequate financial return for the tremendous sacrifices that immediate warfare would entail. Besides, Foscari had left behind him, as one of his legacies of misfortune, a depleted exchequer. During the nine years that followed the Turks applied their military genius to cementing and developing their land and sea power; and Venice at length awoke to the fact that while she had been sleeping, the ruler of Constantinople had been busily preparing for her destruction.

When Pius II. preached his crusade against the Infidel, in 1462, the republic was only too ready to respond. Hungary and Burgundy joined in the alliance; but when Pius died, two years later, the crusade collapsed, and Venice was left to face the common enemy alone.¹ Europe showed throughout a cynical indifference to the fate of the republic. When Venice asked for help, she was told that her long-drawn-out wars with Turkey

¹ Romanin, iv. 321 *et seq.*

were her own affair and not that of the rest of Christendom. But if she failed to beat back the conqueror, or made peace with him, Europe charged her with compromising the interests of civilization and jeopardizing the cause of the Church in her selfish interests.

In 1470 Negropont was lost, and in 1478 Scutari fell after a heroic defense. Venice, no doubt, made the best fight she could against tremendous odds, and should not have been blamed if she was willing to come to terms in 1479. Taking advantage of the absorption of Venice in warfare on the mainland, the sultan, urged it was said by Ludovico Sforza,¹ resumed hostilities in 1498. The short and disastrous campaign which followed ended in the defeat of Venice at Sapienza on August 25, 1499, and the disgrace of the Venetian admiral, Antonio Grimani. The Turks followed up their victory by dispatching a flying column by land through Hungary to Friuli.² With the enemy at her very doors, and with Europe unwilling to help her, there was nothing left for Venice but to accept the humiliating terms offered

¹ See letter of Alvise Manenti. Romanin, v. 144.

² Sabellico, 490.

by the victor, by which she lost many places in the Morea and in the Archipelago.¹ Although the Christian powers had refused their help, the moment the peace was signed Venice was accused of betraying Christendom for the purpose of turning her arms against Christian nations in Italy. Yet the peace that Venice had purchased at so great sacrifice came none too soon, for the complications that had arisen upon the mainland required all her energies and resources to meet.

Events in the fifteenth century moved with great rapidity, and no country in Europe was more vitally affected by their march than was Venice. As a commercial state, any occurrence inimical to her trade interests could not be otherwise than immediately disastrous. Much of her ruin may be directly traced to her shortsightedness, which prevented her adapting herself to new economic conditions. She was up to the last a firm believer in a protective tariff, and the ruinous colonial system that forbade her dependencies to trade

¹ The sultan's letter confirming the treaty was dated October 6, 1503; the treaty had already been ratified by the Venetian Senate, May 4, 1503. Romanin, v. 153, 154.

with or through any other market but that of the mother country.

Her blunder in leading the sack of Constantinople, in 1204, was followed by the even more grievous mistake of giving the Turk time in which to create a sea power. For that error she was fully responsible, but she was in no way to blame for the indifference with which Europe left her to play the part of buffer state against the Moslem; the result of which was to Venice the loss of Negropont, the Morea, and most of her possessions in the Archipelago, and to Europe the creation of the never-ending Eastern question.

In 1486 the Cape of Good Hope was discovered, and as a result the natural commercial supremacy of the republic passed from her forever. She no longer controlled the easiest and quickest route between the East and the West, for the new route, though longer in distance, was shorter in time and far safer than the old. Merchants preferred to buy at Lisbon goods that had been sent through from the Orient without breaking bulk, rather than to patronize Venice, where merchandise could only be received after al-

most innumerable reshipments, and vexatious, dangerous, and costly exactions in the dominions of the sultan.¹ Moreover the journey from Lisbon to the north presented many advantages over that through the Alps from Venice. The natural distributing centre of Europe shifted from the Adriatic to the Atlantic.

Had the Peace of Lodi² (1454) lasted for any time, it might have been possible for Venice, by consolidating and extending her continental possessions, to survive the ruin of her commerce, and to become eventually a great mainland state. But Venice was left no time for internal development. While she was straining her resources beyond her strength in fighting the Turk upon the sea, events were occurring in Italy which forced her to reap the inevitable crop she had planted in the election to the throne of Francesco Foscari.

In Italy the kaleidoscope of politics produced endless combinations. The emperor, Spain, and France had all interested them-

¹ Priuli the diarist points out that dues were levied at so many points along the old route that goods costing a ducat at the point of departure ended by costing from seventy to one hundred. Hazlitt, ii. 135.

² See *supra*, 137.

selves in the affairs of the peninsula, attracted by its prosperity and wealth, as the earlier barbarians had been drawn to the most civilized land of Europe. The excuse for their interest was certain more or less well-founded claims they had set up in Naples and Milan.

In 1494 Ludovico Sforza, called *Il Moro*, lord of Milan, made the mistake of inviting the aid of Charles VIII. of France to make good his claims against Naples. *Il Moro*, who was a man of great capacity and strength, having deposed his nephew Gian Galeazzo and usurped the throne, expected that his nephew's father-in-law, Alfonzo of Naples, would espouse the former's cause.¹ He desired Charles to crush Alfonzo, and then retire to France. But Charles, having conquered Naples, showed an evident disposition to enlarge his new acquisitions. *Il Moro* became seriously alarmed and turned to Venice for help by which Charles was defeated and driven from Italy.

Louis XII., who succeeded Charles VIII. upon the throne of France, in 1498 united in his own person all the French claims

¹ Sismondi, 283.

against Italy, including that of the house of Orléans against Milan.¹ Venice, impelled by her insatiable land-hunger, regardless of her relations with Sforza, now formed an alliance with France for the partition of Sforza's domain, and the latter, discovering the treachery of his ally, retaliated by inciting the Turks to declare war against the republic, in which at Sapienza Venice was utterly defeated.

Meanwhile, the French had entered Italy, and, after a siege, captured Milan, Venice at the same time occupying Cremona. The success of Venice was of little service to her, for her capture of Cremona only helped to convince Spain and the emperor that her ambitions could not be satisfied. France stood ready to betray her associate at any time that might prove convenient.

On the death of Alexander VI. (Borgia) in 1503, Venice committed the last of a series of most fatal errors. In the breaking up of Cesare Borgia's kingdom she attempted to seize Faenza, Ravenna, and Rimini. Julius II. at once claimed them as part of the domain of the Church, and appealed to Louis and Maximilian for help.

¹ Sismondi, 296.

Maximilian was not anxious to combine in any undertaking with Louis, and so, before answering Julius's overtures, offered to enter into an alliance with Venice for the purpose of expelling the French from Milan. Venice was partially true to her ally, France; and was only willing to promise Maximilian neutrality. This did not satisfy the emperor, who forthwith joined the pope and Louis in their coalition against the republic.

On December 10, 1508, was signed the League of Cambrai,¹ the signers being Margaret of Austria, in behalf of her father, Maximilian, and Cardinal d'Amboise in behalf of Louis of France. The object of the League was the destruction of Venice, and the partition of her territory. The two monarchs undertook to distribute the possessions of the republic among the pope, Spain, Hungary, Savoy, the house of Este, and themselves, thus giving the leading states of continental Europe a direct interest in her destruction.²

On April 27, 1509, the pope launched a bull of excommunication and interdict against the republic. The French under Trivulzio

¹ Romanin, v. 188.

² Sismondi, 308.

crossed the Adda, and on May 14, at Aguedella, nearly annihilated the Venetian army. By June 1 Venice had lost practically all her possessions on the mainland. Fortunately for the republic, when her prospects looked blackest help came from an unexpected quarter. Julius, having recovered Ravenna, Faenza, and Rimini, had no desire to see Venice destroyed and supplanted by a foreigner. An alliance was formed between the republic and the Holy See, and France was checked. Maximilian was disgusted; Spain was suspicious of the good faith of her ally, and the League of Cambrai collapsed through the jealousy of its members.

Spain joined Venice and the pope in what was known as the Holy League, which had the tacit support of the emperor and England.¹ By June, 1512, France held scarcely any territory in Italy, and Venice found herself in the hands of Julius and Spain. Her conduct was worthy of the age. She formed a counter-alliance with France, but yesterday her enemy, and after the latter had been defeated at Novara, June 6, 1513, she retreated to the Lagoon. France retired across the

¹ Romanin, v. 258.

Alps and Venice was left at the mercy of her enemies.

In 1515 Louis XII. died and was succeeded by Francis I., who now marched on Italy, and with the help of Venice occupied Milan. The Peace of Brussels (December 3, 1516) followed, which restored to Venice her territory on the mainland.¹

And so, after eight years of perpetual warfare, eight years of heroic sacrifice and unselfish patriotism, Venice came once more to her own. But the eight years of war which had succeeded the League of Cambrai had been preceded by sixteen years of struggle with the Turk. For twenty-four years Venice had been battling against tremendous odds. From her campanile she had seen the flames kindled by the Ottoman in the villages of Friuli. Twice had her fortress of Meghera been occupied by the enemy and her own guns been turned against her. She had known the pinch of want almost to starvation; she had seen her treasury depleted and her patricians impoverished. At last when peace came it found a very different Venice from that she had been a quarter of a cen-

¹ Sismondi, 324.

ture before. The banner of Saint Mark floated once more over the mainland, but the republic it typified was but the battered wreck of what it had once been.

The Peace of Brussels was followed by a period of comparative quiet. In 1530 began that death-struggle with the Turk that was destined to last nearly two centuries and only to end with the complete exhaustion of both combatants. Europe at times went through the formality of helping Venice, but the help accorded her from time to time by Spain, France, and Italy was purely nominal, and the republic was obliged to bear the burden alone.

In 1570 Cyprus was lost, but the next year Sebastiano Venier gained a gallant victory for Venice and for Spain at Lepanto. The result was absolutely valueless, for Philip II. of Spain declined to utilize the success,¹ and by the succeeding year the Turks had restored their fleet. In 1573 Cyprus was formally ceded to the sultan and peace existed for almost twenty years. But it was a peace of dishonor, only maintained by the payment of blackmail to the Ottoman and by

¹ Romanin, vi. 326.

the constant acceptance of humiliations and insults.

The sack of Constantinople in 1204 was the first step in a mistaken foreign policy ; then came the lust of conquest upon the mainland ; the Turks captured Constantinople, and the power of Venice was weakened ; the Cape of Good Hope was discovered, and the structure of her might tottered ; the League of Cambrai followed, and Venice fell, never to rise again. Her subsequent history is the recital of the rapid decline of one who was doomed to die. The end did not come for nearly three centuries, but long before the grave closed over her, she had lapsed into a state of political and commercial coma, from which nothing could rouse her.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MACHINE

By the beginning of the sixteenth century, when Venice entered upon the last period of her life, the oligarchic machine had been completed in all its details. During the last three hundred years of its existence some minor alterations were made, but no substantial changes were again undertaken. When it fell into disrepair and required general overhauling, it was patched up here and there for the moment only. An adaptation to modern requirements and conditions might have prolonged its life, but it was allowed to go creaking and lumbering on its way until it broke down, worn out by rust and neglect.

While the legislative, executive, and judicial functions of the Venetian government were never sharply separated, there was enough system in the distribution of duties and powers to permit of a rough classification under the heads with which we are familiar.

There was a constant overlapping and intermingling of authority among the several branches of government ; some of the courts possessed executive authority ; the executive had to a certain extent the power of initiative, while the legislature could at will alter the fundamental law without let or hindrance.

The sovereignty of the republic lay neither in the people nor in the crown, but in the oligarchy ; or rather in those members of the ruling caste who belonged to the Great Council, which was the source of all authority and was the supreme power in the state. It consisted of all nobles, with the exception of those in holy orders,¹ above the age of twenty-five, who upon reaching that age became members by right. In addition, every Santa Barbara's day (December 4), thirty young nobles, who had passed their twentieth birthday, were chosen by lot, and permitted to sit in the council, with neither vote nor voice.

The Great Council was the legislature of the republic ; unrestricted by any written

¹ *La Storia del Governo di Venezia*, del Signor A. della Houssaia, 2 vols. Colonia, 1681, i. 30. I have used the first Italian edition of Amelot de la Houssaye.

constitution it could enact, amend, or repeal any law upon any subject. Being absolute, it could not only delegate its authority but could revoke authority already granted. All lesser councils, all magistrates, officials, and ministers were either directly or indirectly dependent upon it, and even the senate was its creature. It reserved to itself the all-important power of patronage. With the exception of the savii, ambassadors, envoys, consuls, and some other officials, it elected all servants of the state.¹ The Great Council

¹ The usual method of election was as follows : Three urns were placed in front of the ducal throne, those on the right and left containing half as many balls each as there were members present, all the balls being white with the exception of thirty in each urn which were of gold. In the middle urn were sixty balls, thirty-six gold and twenty-four white. The office to be filled having been announced to the Great Council, the members drew from the urns on the right and left. Those who drew white resumed their seats, the sixty who drew gold drew again from the middle urn. Of the sixty, the twenty-four who drew white resumed their seats, the thirty-six who drew gold became electors. They then divided themselves by lot into four groups of nine each. The groups retired separately, and each nominated a candidate for the vacant office, six votes being required for nomination. The four candidates thus nominated were then presented to the Great Council and voted for by that body, a plurality electing. No two members of any family were permitted to serve as electors for the same vacancy.

sat ordinarily every Sunday and holiday, except Lady day and Saint Mark's day, from noon until sunset in winter and from eight in the morning until noon in summer. It might be called together at any time by the ducal councilors. These extraordinary meetings were of frequent occurrence, as the mere election of officers consumed, on an average, fifty legislative days a year.¹

Legislative propositions could be brought before the Great Council only by the senate, the doge, the ducal councilors acting as a unit by a majority vote, the chiefs of the Criminal Forty, if unanimous, the three *avogadori del comun*, and in matters affecting their departments by the *esecutori alle acque*, and the *provveditori all' arsenale*, if unanimous.²

The Venetian noble began his career as an office-holder almost immediately on becoming a member of the Great Council. Romanin gives a list of some 824 offices³ which could be filled only by patricians; and this list does not include the rectors of pro-

If all four groups of electors agreed on the same candidate, he was declared elected without the formality of a ballot. Houssaye, i. 12 *et seq.*

¹ Yriarte, 67.

² Yriarte, 64.

³ Romanin, viii. 399.

vinces nor the captains of war-vessels, who were all selected from the aristocracy. As at its maximum the membership of the Great Council never exceeded 1671, in order to find officials it was often necessary that two and sometimes more offices should be filled by the same patrician. The refusal to accept office was punishable by a fine of two thousand zecchini, and by exclusion from the Great Council and the Broglio for two years.¹

As there was absolute political equality among the members of the ruling class, the tendency was against specialization in office-holding. There was the semblance of permanency in the membership of the appellate courts, but with the exception of these judges the Venetian nobles were called upon to perform the most diverse and contrary duties. No office was beneath the dignity of the highest patrician, and a retiring bailo of Constantinople or inquisitor of state thought it no derogation of his position to be elected to a subordinate and almost humble charge.

Because of the unwieldiness of its size, the Great Council, in the twelfth century, delegated much of its legislative authority to the

¹ Houssaye, i. 34.

council of *pregadi*, or senate. The senate was first elected by the Great Council in 1229, and consisted of sixty members; the minimum age for membership being thirty, and the term of office one year, senators being eligible for reëlection. Subsequently it was increased by the addition of a *giunta* or *zonta* of sixty members, elected by the senate itself. In 1450, at the instance of the *signoria*, it was still further increased by the addition of the Criminal Forty, the Council of Ten, and many other officials, some with and some without votes, so that eventually it numbered about three hundred members.¹

Its jurisdiction covered nearly all political, administrative, and economic matters. It had the power to declare war and to conclude peace, to make treaties of alliance and of commerce. It controlled the armament of the state and the arsenal, taxation and commerce, the mines, the forests and the waters, the mint and the treasury, and the administration of the provinces. It elected the *savii*, the ambassadors, envoys, and consuls.

The chief executive power of the republic was lodged in the various component parts

¹ Romanin, viii. 335.

of the *pien collegio*, consisting of the doge, the six ducal councilors, the three chiefs of the Criminal Forty (these ten constituting the *signoria*), and the *collegio* proper, of sixteen *savii*.

The doge was the titular and visible head of the state, elected indirectly by the Great Council for life.¹ From an absolute monarch, by successive constitutional changes and constant alterations in the *promissione* or coronation oath, he had been reduced to a position that was far more ornamental than powerful. As a member of the various councils of the government he still retained the authority incident to such membership, so that with tact and judgment he was able to exercise as much influence as any individual in the republic.

¹ The method of electing the doge was as follows : All members of the Great Council under thirty years of age were excluded. Those present, by lot, chose thirty, who by lot chose nine of their own number. The nine elected forty, seven votes being required to elect. The forty, by lot, chose twelve of their own number. The twelve elected twenty-five, nine votes being required to elect. The twenty-five, by lot, chose nine of their own number. The nine elected forty-five, seven votes being required to elect. The forty-five, by lot, chose eleven of their own number. The eleven elected forty-one, nine votes being required to elect. The forty-one elected the doge, twenty-five votes being required to elect. Houssaye, i. 18 *et seq.*

Surrounded by all the external pomp and magnificence of which Venice was capable, he was left scarcely more personal liberty than the very prisoners in the *pozzi*. He might not leave Venice without the permission of the Great Council, nor was he expected to leave the ducal palace except on occasions of ceremony. He was forbidden to hold any communication with foreign princes or ambassadors, nor could he perform of himself any executive act. He could not invest any part of his fortune outside of Venice, nor could his sons, brothers, or near relatives hold public office. He could not resign without the consent of the Great Council, while the latter had the right to depose him at any time. Besides the selection of the officers of his own household, his patronage was limited to the appointment of the *primicerio ducale*, or senior canon of the church of S. Marco.

Upon the death of the doge, and before the selection of his successor, the Great Council elected three *inquisitori al doge defunto*, and five *correttori alla promissione ducale*. It was the duty of the inquisitors to make a rigid examination of the conduct of the dead

doge, so that, were malfeasance discovered, his estate might be made to suffer. Their appointment was really in the nature of a warning to the crown, for there was no instance of their powers being exerted at the expense of any ducal family. It was the duty of the correctors to propose to the Great Council changes in the coronation oath. This duty was so vigorously performed that upon the accession of almost every doge, the ducal authority was still further limited by the terms of his oath.

The ducal councilors were elected by the Great Council, three at a time, one from each sestiero,¹ and held office for one year. Without the concurrence of his councilors, the doge could perform no political act. The dogeship was, so to speak, held in commission by the ducal council. It was their duty to prepare business for submission to the Great Council, which they could call in extraordinary session. They elected from their number one of the inquisitors of state, and with the doge were members of the Council of Ten. They constituted, with the doge and the three chiefs of the Criminal Forty, the

¹ Romanin, vii. 330.

signoria,¹ the surviving members of which held the regency upon the death of the doge.

Of their year of office the ducal councilors served four months in the Criminal Forty. After 1437 three additional councilors were chosen, called *inferiori*, or *da basso*, from their place of residence. When the three chiefs of the Forty served with the signoria, they were replaced by three councilors *da basso*. There was thus a constant interchange of service between the members of the ducal council and of the Criminal Forty.²

Of the sixteen *savii* who composed the collegio, six were *savii del consiglio*, or *savii grandi*, ministers without portfolios; five were *savii di terraferma*, charged with the duties that their name implies; and five were *savii agli ordini*, originally charged with the management of the navy, but ultimately of little importance and without votes in the collegio. Of the *savii di terraferma*, three had specific titles and functions. The Savio Cassier was the Finance Minister, the Savio alla Scrittura

¹ Romanin, viii. 331. Hazlitt, ii. 439, includes in the signoria the Council of Ten, but quotes no authority for his statement. Houssaye, i. 54, makes it consist of the doge and his six councilors only.

² Houssaye, i. 229, and Romanin, viii. 331.

was the Minister of War, while the Savio alle Ordinanze was the Minister of Militia.

The savii were elected by the senate, and held office for six months, not being immediately reëligible. The savii agli ordini having no votes, the collegio really consisted of eleven members, who by their dexterity, their influence, and less laudable means, absolutely guided and controlled the senate.¹

Each week one of the eleven voting savii was chosen as the spokesman of his colleagues, and was for the time being a sort of president of the council, or premier. The collegio prepared for submission to the senate all official business, including that dealing with foreign relations. It gave their commissions to the generals, envoys, and rectors of the republic. It controlled ecclesiastical affairs, while the five savii alla mercanzia (board of trade) and the magistrato alla sanità (board of health) were directly dependent upon it. With the signoria it constituted the pien collegio, which corresponded to a certain extent to the ministry of a modern parliamentary government. It represented the majesty of the republic, and, as its actual

¹ Romanin, viii. 332.

head, received officially foreign ambassadors, nuncios, and envoys; took cognizance of the most important matters of state, and intervened in all the councils.¹

At the head of the judicial hierarchy was the Council of Ten, finally established in 1335. Its authority and its duties were never clearly defined; they were so broad as to include criminal jurisdiction over the security of the state, the guardianship of her citizens, and the public morals. In times of danger to the state the Ten were practically the supreme power in the republic. The Ten tried all nobles accused of crime and all citizens suspected of treason. They were elected by the Great Council for one year, and were not immediately reëligible. With them were joined the doge and his six councilors, so that the Ten really numbered seventeen. Every month they elected from their number three new chiefs, who formed for their term of office a species of executive committee. The Ten sat in the senate, and had their own police force, called *sbirri*, and a fund, of which they were required to give no account.

In 1539² the inquisitors of state became a

¹ Romanin, viii. 333.

² Romanin, viii. 344.

permanent part of the government. One of the inquisitors was chosen by the ducal counselors from their number, the other two by the Ten from their number. The inquisitors were really a committee of the Ten with power to act summarily in cases of treason or suspected treason. They moved secretly and noiselessly, always swiftly, and not always wisely. They were the expression of the fear of its own membership felt by the oligarchy in later days, and did much to bring the Ten into disfavor and disrepute.

Before the establishment of the senate as a permanent and powerful institution, many of its functions were performed by the Council of Forty, or Quarantia. Subsequently the Forty became a purely judicial body, its three chiefs retaining their seats in the signoria, and its members their seats and votes in the senate. As litigation increased, the jurisdiction of the Forty was divided among three councils, the original council being called the Quarantia Criminale, or Criminal Forty, while the new bodies were called the Quarantia Civile vecchia and the Quarantia Civile nuova. The Criminal Forty had original jurisdiction over certain grave crimes and appellate juris-

diction over all criminal cases tried by the lower courts except such as the Council of Ten reserved to itself. The old Civil Forty had appellate jurisdiction in cases tried in Venice involving more than fifteen hundred ducats; while the new Civil Forty had appellate jurisdiction in cases tried in the provinces involving the same amount.

There were also two so-called colleges of twenty-five and fifteen members respectively, with appellate jurisdiction in cases involving less than fifteen hundred ducats. Service in the appellate courts was practically during good behavior,¹ the Great Council having adopted the custom of electing the judges — for such they were — first to the colleges, then in turn to the new Civil Forty, the old Civil Forty, and the Criminal Forty; and at the expiration of a term of office in the latter, beginning over again with the colleges. The total term of service was thirty-two months, of which eight months was passed in each court.

In the golden days of the republic there were nine procuratori di S. Marco, of whom three, called di supra, were charged with

¹ Romanin, viii. 337.

the management of the funds of S. Marco ; the remaining six constituted a probate and orphans' court, three called *de citra* having jurisdiction *di quà*, or to the north of the Grand Canal, and three, called *de ultra*, having jurisdiction *di là*, or to the south of the Grand Canal. The procurators were elected by the Great Council for life, and had official residences on the Piazza S. Marco. As the duties of the office were light, and the dignity great, elections were conferred as the reward of distinguished services to the state.

In its decline, when the republic fell upon evil days, the procuratorial honor was sold by the Great Council for money. At one period there were as many as forty procurators, of whom thirty-one had purchased the office, and only nine had been elected for merit.

Of the civil courts of first instance, the most important were the *corte del proprio*, with jurisdiction over marriage settlements, intestate estates, the division of fortunes, and builders' claims ; the *forestier*, with jurisdiction in cases between foreigners, or between a foreigner and a Venetian ; the *mobile*, which tried cases involving personal

property of less than fifty ducats in value; the court di petizione, which tried cases involving personal property of more than that amount; and the piovego, having jurisdiction in cases of breach of contract, usury, and bills of exchange.

The criminal police power was exercised by the six signori di notte al criminale who were elected by the Great Council for the term of sixteen months. They were responsible for the good order of the city, and could arrest without warrant any one caught in the act of committing a crime. The five provveditori alla pace tried all crimes against the person, except those resulting in death or serious wounds.

The avogadori del comun were among the most important officials of the republic. They were three in number, nominated by the senate and confirmed by the Great Council for the term of sixteen months. Like the senators, they were required to be at least thirty years of age. Their duties were a combination of those of the Roman tribunes and of the procureurs généraux of monarchical France. They were members of both the Great Council and the senate, neither of

which could hold a legal session without the presence of at least one avogadoro. They exercised a suspensory veto upon the resolutions, decrees, and sentences of the provincial rectors; they watched over the morals of children, and could require the payment of alimony to a wife pending her writ for divorce or separation. They passed upon the claims of applicants for admission to the nobility or cittadinanza and were the custodians of the Libro d' Oro.

It was the duty of the avogadori to bring crimes to the attention of the proper courts, to act as juges d'instruction in preparing the cases, and as public prosecutors before the Criminal Forty and the Ten; where if they thought necessary they could arrest judgment. For eight months after the expiration of their term of office they continued to sit and vote in the senate.

The republic was represented abroad by ambassadors at Rome, Vienna, Madrid, and Paris; an envoy at St. Petersburg, a bailo at Constantinople, ministers resident at Milan, Turin, Naples, and London; and consuls at all the principal cities where Venetian merchants traded. Each head of an embassy or

mission was accompanied by one or more secretaries. The entire personnel of the diplomatic and consular services was elected by the senate ; the term of office for ambassadors and ministers being usually two, that for secretaries four or five years. The most important post in the diplomatic service was the bailo, who exercised exclusive jurisdiction over Venetians resident in Constantinople. The ambassadors, the envoy, and the bailo were always members of the nobility, while the ministers resident, the secretaries, and the consuls were usually members of the *cittadinanza* or middle class, taken from the *cancelleria ducale* which constituted the permanent civil service of the government. The *cancelleria* was composed entirely of members of the middle class, who entered it in youth, after passing through special schools, and remained in it for life. It was the only official career open to those who were not of the aristocracy, but as some of its higher members were paid as much as three thousand dollars of our money a year,¹ it was considered most desirable.

At its head and responsible for its disci-

¹ Romanin, viii. 390.

pline was the cancelliere grande or grand chancellor, who was nominated by the ducal councilors, and elected for life by the Great Council. He possessed *ex officio* the title of cavaliere; was inducted into office with much ceremony, and upon his death was given a public funeral. He sat without a vote in the Great Council and in the senate, and with the vice-chancellors appointed the twenty-four notaries. The chancellery furnished not only certain diplomatic and consular officers, but provided the secretaries and clerks for all the various councils of the republic.

In governing her provinces Venice was always careful to respect local institutions and prejudices as much as was consistent with absolute control.

Over her insular or so-called marine possessions the provveditori ruled as Venetian governors. Her dominions on terraferma were permitted a very large measure of local self-government. The republic was represented by a podesta and a captain as dual executives, called jointly the rectors. The jurisdiction of the former included the maintenance of public order, corporations both secular and religious, the schools, the arts,

commerce, health, agriculture, the waters and highways; and the administration of both civil and criminal law. The captain commanded the military forces and was responsible for the defense of the province. With the camerlengo,¹ who was a subordinate official, his authority extended over public works, the lands, taxation, and all fiscal matters. Appeals from the decisions of the rectors could be taken to the senate, while in political decisions appeals lay either in the senate or the Council of Ten. Criminal cases were tried by a judge called *maleficio*, sentence being pronounced by the *podesta*, who himself tried certain civil cases. Criminal appeals were carried to the Criminal Forty; civil appeals to the new Civil Forty. The *avogadori* could at any time suspend the execution of any decision or sentence of the rectors, and bring the matter to the attention of the proper council.

In later years the offices of *podesta* and captain were often consolidated in one rector; while the smaller towns and castles were always governed by a single noble, who reported directly to the Council of Ten in

¹ Romanin, viii. 396.

political matters. The provinces were allowed to retain their legislatures, with power to legislate on all local matters, subject to the veto of the rectors. They imposed taxes for local purposes, and were represented by agents in Venice very much as the British colonies are represented to-day in London.

The jealousy of individual prominence which always possessed the oligarchy was perhaps more apparent in its management of the army and navy than in that of any other branch of government. No commander was permitted to have a free hand. Every general and admiral was hampered by the presence of one and sometimes two *provveditori*, with whom he was obliged to consult on all important questions. The oligarchy preferred the risk of defeat, due to divided authority, to what it considered the greater danger of a successful popular hero. Though the Venetians never cared for land warfare, preferring to hire mercenaries to do their fighting, nevertheless the *condottieri* of the republic were obliged to have constantly with them the inevitable *provveditori*.

In time of war the fleet was commanded by a captain-general, elected by the Great

Council; in time of peace the highest naval officer was the provveditore generale da mar, residing at Corfu, and governing that island. The powers of the admiralty were distributed among a number of boards. The three patroni dell' arsenale, elected by the Great Council and serving for thirty-two months, were the governors of the arsenal; and the three provveditori dell' arsenale, elected for two years by the senate, were a board of inspection. The visdomini alla tana regulated the finances of the arsenal, while extraordinary inspections were made from time to time by inquisitors elected for the purpose.

The three provveditori all' armamento, elected for three years by the senate, were a board of armament, equipment, and recruitment; while the presidenti al collegio della milizia da mar provided the men to man the oars. Over all these boards the senate exercised a general supervision, and to it reported directly the provveditore generale of Dalmatia, the captain of the Gulf, and all the lesser naval commissions and officials.

Besides the principal councils and boards, the machinery of government included a great number of lesser commissions dealing with

almost every branch of human activity. Romanin gives a list of 142,¹ ranging from the Great Council and the Council of Ten to the board which superintended the slaughterhouse. Although it was one of the most governed of nations, and although the number of its officials was enormous, the cost of government was comparatively low. Some officials received no salaries, and the salaries that were paid were all very modest. The holding of public office was an obligation from which no patrician could escape. He was not only expected to devote his time to the performance of its duties, but to spend his wealth in sustaining its dignity.

The senate held the purse-strings of the republic, superintending both the collection and expenditure of the revenues through a number of subordinate boards and councils.

The chief sources of revenue were a direct property tax, the customs, tributes from the provinces, the salt monopoly, and later the tobacco monopoly and the lottery. At its maximum the annual revenue never exceeded seven million ducats, or between five and a half and six million dollars of our money,

¹ Romanin, viii. 399 *et seq.*

which, with a population in the Dogado of about three millions, represented a per capita of about \$1.85.¹ The machine of government in its full development was the perfect tool of a master political craftsman, the oligarchy. The people, to be sure, were deprived of any voice in the affairs of state, and were allowed to fill only the minor and less responsible offices: they found, however, some compensation for political activity in the management of their trade-guilds and confraternities, and in the fact that they were the least taxed people in Europe.

¹ Romanin, viii. 363.

CHAPTER XV

SPAIN

IN her relations with the Church, Venice never permitted her religious scruples to interfere with what she considered her material welfare. Her people, as individuals, were always good Catholics, but the republic, as a state, cared for her own interests first, and only bowed to Rome when it suited her convenience or when she was forced to do so. She never willingly tolerated the interference of the Church in temporal matters; and was always ready to take extreme measures in maintaining this position.

The papacy, on the other hand, always regarded Venice with dislike and suspicion. From her close association with non-Catholic countries, the republic was inclined to look upon heresy with altogether too much complacency to suit the Holy See, while her constant and at times friendly intercourse with the Turk was a source of never ending

vexation to a power among whose objects in existence was the triumph of the cross over the crescent. One of the earliest recorded events in Venetian history was a difference with John VIII., in 877, over the appointment to the vacant see of Torcello.¹ In this instance Venice had her way, and induced the pope to withhold his threatened anathema. From the very beginning the republic insisted on the right to appoint her clergy, even including the patriarch, without the right of revision by Rome.

The sieges of Zara and Constantinople in 1202-4 were undertaken despite the express prohibition of the pope, whose wrath was only appeased by the temporary healing of the Greek schism. In 1282 occurred the massacre of the French at Palermo, known to history as the Sicilian Vespers. Charles of Anjou, who had conquered Sicily at the invitation of the pope, found his power seriously shaken, and in the war with the Spanish claimant which followed was aided by the spiritual might of Rome. Venice forbade her clergy to preach the cross in favor of Charles.

Immediately after this act of insubordina-

¹ Romanin, i. 195.

tion an anathema was launched against the republic, and she was placed under an interdict. But in 1286 Martin IV. died, and the republic came to an arrangement with his successor by which the interdict was removed and the Inquisition permanently established in Venice. But the powers of the Holy Office were greatly restricted; for the inquisitor, while named by the pope, required confirmation by the signoria, and was assisted in his functions by three Venetian officials called *savii all' eresia*.¹ Venice was always lenient to heretics, and during the entire existence of the Holy Office no fire was ever kindled at the stake within her territory.

The useless war with Ferrara in 1308, when Venice, until then Guelph, became Ghibelline, brought upon her a bull of excommunication from the court of Avignon. Venice ignored the excommunication, and after a disastrous campaign secured its removal only by the personal intercession of the doge Zorzi.² In 1483, the second war with Ferrara brought from Sixtus IV. another interdict. Venice appealed to the next

¹ Romanin, ii. 254.

² Romanin, iii. 23.

general council, and caused a copy of the appeal to be nailed to the door of San Celso in Rome. At the Peace of Lodi the interdict was removed, but during the existence of the League of Cambrai the republic was again excommunicated, and again appealed to a future council.

Thus before the beginning of the sixteenth century Venice had had three serious difficulties with the papacy; had been excommunicated three times, and had been twice placed under an interdict. On each occasion her difficulties with Rome had been political and had been caused by the constantly growing spirit of aggression manifested by the republic. The Peace of Brussels had left her but the shadow of her former strength, and yet it had hardly been concluded when she prepared to make her last stand against the claims of the Church.

By the terms of the treaty made with the pope in 1510 she had withdrawn her appeal to a future council, acknowledged the justice of the interdict, and yielded all the claims to independence she had formerly made. She agreed that in the future priests charged with crime should be tried by the ecclesias-

tical courts alone, that the clergy should not be taxed without the papal consent, and renounced the right to nominate the bishops within her territory.¹

In 1560 the republic accepted the decrees of the Council of Trent only to ignore them. In 1581 Gregory XII. asserted his right to visit by proxy the religious houses of Venice. The republic protested, and yielded. The pope claimed temporal power over Ceneda, and objected to the taxing of the clergy of Brescia and to the presence of heretic churches in Venice. The republic, while chafing under the demands of Rome, saw the necessity of preserving a good understanding. She realized that in the exhausted condition in which the recent war had left her, she could not afford an open rupture with the pope, who would undoubtedly have been supported by Spain. And so she temporized until, on March 3, 1605, Clement died, and Paul V. came to the throne as the candidate of the Spanish party.

Paul was a vigorous upholder of the papal prerogative, and lost no time after his election in attempting to enforce the decrees of

¹ Romanin, v. 241 *et seq.*

Trent.¹ His efforts were directed against every power that had been indifferent in their acceptance, but his especial care was reserved for Venice.

A strict compliance by the republic with the Trentine decrees was almost impossible. This Spain knew and hoped that should Venice disobey the papal injunction she would be placed in so false a position before the world as to make the organization of a new European coalition against her a matter of no great difficulty. For Spain had become the dominant power in Italy, and the possession of the Venetian *terraferma* would have given her absolute control of the peninsula.

Throughout the Spanish machinations against Venice Philip III. played a double game. Officially he took no active part, leaving the direction of affairs to the Duke de Ossuna, his viceroy of Naples, and to the Count de Fuentes, his governor of Milan. He was thus in a position to accept the fruits of success or to disclaim the failure of his scheme. Shortly after the elevation of the new pope two events occurred which gave

¹ Ranke's *History of the Popes*, iii., and Romanin, vii. 19 *et seq.*

the Spanish party at Rome the opportunity it had desired. The patriarch of Venice died, and the senate elected his successor, asking the papal confirmation. At about the same time two priests were arrested by the civil authorities of the republic, charged with crimes of a serious nature, and subsequently tried and convicted by the criminal courts.

The curia demanded that in accordance with the bull of Clement VIII. the patriarch-elect should repair to Rome, there to be examined. The signoria objected, although in the case of the new patriarch's predecessor that course had been followed. The curia further demanded that the two imprisoned priests should be turned over to the ecclesiastical authorities as provided by the treaty of 1510, and again the signoria refused. This double refusal was followed almost immediately by the receipt of two briefs from Rome dealing with the two main questions in dispute. The day upon which the first brief was received the doge Grimani died, and shortly afterwards Leonardo Donato was elected in his place. Donato was of the same mould as his opponent the pope. If Paul was insistent in upholding the power and dignity

of the Holy See, Donato was no less firm in his support of the claims of the republic.

The election of the new doge was followed by the retention at a salary of two hundred ducats of the Servite monk Paolo Sarpi, as theological and canonical adviser or counsel.¹ Sarpi entered upon his duties with all the ardor of a patriot and the devotion of a loyal and faithful Catholic. The signoria, guided by Sarpi, replied to the papal briefs, in a general defense of its position. The pope gave Venice twenty-four days in which to recede, and on the expiration of that time launched a bull of excommunication and interdict.² The signoria forbade any Venetian priest to receive it or any other notice from Rome; declared it null and void, and expelled the Teatines and Capuchins, who refused to obey. As a matter of precaution the fortifications were strengthened and the militia called out.

Spain found Europe unwilling to give her the encouragement she had expected. She hesitated to attempt single-handed the task of crushing Venice, for the loss of the Ar-

¹ Romanin, vii. 37.

² Romanin, vii. 44 *et seq.*

mada in 1588 and the rebellion in the Netherlands had seriously weakened her.

The republic received the moral support of France, England, and the Grisons, as well as of the Protestant princes of Germany. Philip, realizing that he had overreached himself, joined the other powers in bringing about an amicable solution of the difficulty. The imprisoned priests were handed over to Cardinal de Joyeuse, the ambassador of Henry IV., to "gratify his most Christian majesty, and without prejudice to the authority which he (the doge) has to try ecclesiastics." The cardinal in turn surrendered the prisoners to the ecclesiastical authorities. The papal interdict was removed, and a Venetian embassy was dispatched to Rome to return thanks for the act, while the republic recalled its protest and its instructions to its subjects and permitted the expelled religious orders to return.¹

The immediate victory certainly lay with the pope, for he had gained his point in everything but the general question of papal examination of new patriarchs, which, for the time, was waived. The matter of Ceneda was

¹ Romanin, vii. 57.

settled eventually to the satisfaction of the republic, and so far as the Holy See was concerned, Venice was at peace.

The moving spirit of the revolt against the Church, Fra Paolo Sarpi, had, however, incurred the hatred of Spain. Not unnaturally, she considered him the chief obstacle that had prevented the success of her efforts against the republic. His firmness, his courtesy, and his moderation in dealing with the papacy had won the admiration of Europe and the respect even of the pontiff himself. Nevertheless on October 25, 1607, an attempt was made to murder him, as he was returning to his convent at five o'clock in the afternoon. Although he was stabbed three times, he recovered, to survive two further attempts against his life and to die in his bed in 1623. There seems to be no manner of doubt but that in each case the assassin was hired with Spanish money.

This plot failed, but Spain was implacable. At dawn on May 18, 1618, certain laborers of San Marco, on going to their work across the Piazzetta, beheld, hanging head downward between the red columns, the bodies of fifteen men. As the ghastly spec-

tacle had evidently been arranged during the night, the conclusion was obvious that the victims of the Ten had been strangled in prison before being exposed to public view. It required only a few minutes to collect the crowd which will always assemble in Venice on the most flimsy pretext or at the most imperative demand. It was evident that those hanging from the gibbet were foreigners, for no one in the mass of humanity about them had ever seen them before. But who they were, or why they had suffered, were equal mysteries. Presently a rumor was passed from mouth to mouth that a great conspiracy against the state had happily been averted, and that the instigators of the crime had paid the penalty of their sins. Unsatisfactory as was the explanation, no further details were ever vouchsafed until the republic had been long dead. Its enemies maintained that there never had been a conspiracy and that the Ten, in a moment of abject cowardice, had unnecessarily sacrificed innocent men to its terror.¹ To-day we know the truth, that the conspiracy which the Ten

¹ Daru devotes livre xxxi. of his history to supporting this theory.

averted was one of the most dangerous in Venetian history.

The League of Cambrai had not succeeded because of the jealousy of its members and the resulting impossibility of united action for a common cause. Spain had never ceased to regret the failure of the objects of the league and was ready to take advantage of any chance that might occur for the undoing of Venice. She had been unable to utilize, for her purpose, the rebellion of the republic against the papal authority, but in the second decade of the seventeenth century she found another opportunity to gratify her ambition and in the Duke de Ossuna an ideal instrument.

Ossuna had been Spanish governor of Milan, but had recently been promoted viceroy of Naples, when in 1617 he organized what has become known to history as the Spanish Conspiracy. Acting directly under him were the Duke de Toledo, governor of Milan, and the Marquis de Bedmar, Spanish ambassador at Venice.¹ It has been suggested that Ossuna acted on his own responsibility,² but it is hardly possible that the ambassador of his

¹ Romanin, vii. 112 *et seq.*

² Daru, livre xxxi.

most Catholic majesty would have dared to join him without direct orders from Madrid. As the conspiracy failed, Spain disclaimed all responsibility. But she none the less protected and rewarded the chief conspirators, and had it succeeded, would doubtless have accepted the benefits.

Ossuna began in 1617 by collecting a fleet in the Adriatic, with the purpose of making a descent on Venice, to be supported by help from within the city. To organize treachery in Venice, he made use of a certain Jaques Pierre, a Norman soldier of fortune. Pierre and some of his fellows succeeded in obtaining employment under the republic, through the good will of the Venetian representative at Naples. So successful was Pierre in the accomplishment of his design that over fifty impoverished nobles joined in the effort to ruin their country. There was in the city at the time a corps of foreign mercenary troops waiting departure for foreign service. These Pierre succeeded in winning to his cause.

All was ready for the final act in the tragedy, when one of Pierre's accomplices indiscreetly revealed everything to a young

French gentleman named Juven,¹ who was in Venice seeking employment under the government. Juven carried his informant to the Ten, and that body was soon in possession of all the facts in the case. Pierre and his companions, Langlade and Rossetti, had previously been sent on shipboard. Orders for their death were sent to their commanding officer, who, before executing them, obtained complete confessions of their guilt. Of the conspirators who remained on shore, some fled, some took refuge with the Spanish ambassador, fifteen, as we have mentioned, were strangled and then hanged between the red columns, and fifty Venetian nobles were executed in prison and their bodies dropped into the canal. The Ten acted, as it always did, promptly, mercilessly, and successfully. The Spanish Conspiracy was suppressed before it even began to live. Venice, however, was thoroughly frightened, and did not recover from the shock she had received by the discovery of the Spanish Conspiracy until after she had committed one of the most atrocious judicial murders that ever stained the annals of a nation.

¹ Saint Réal calls him Jaffier.

In 1612, five years earlier than this, it had been learned that the dispatches of Antonio Foscarini, the Venetian ambassador at London, had been divulged. Foscarini was charged with the crime by his secretary, Giulio Muscornio, tried, and acquitted, while Muscornio was sentenced to two years' imprisonment.¹ In 1619 the Earl and Countess of Arundel and Surrey came to Venice to educate their sons. Foscarini, who had known them in London, was a constant visitor at their palace, where he frequently met the Tuscan, Imperial, and Spanish diplomatic representatives. Muscornio, upon his release from prison, based upon this fact a new charge against Foscarini of treasonable correspondence with Milan, the emperor, and Spain, and supported it with papers which he had forged. In 1622 Foscarini was arrested, tried, convicted, and strangled, and his dead body hanged by one foot between the red columns. Four months later, his complete innocence was proved and the Ten acknowledged their error.

The constantly increasing unpopularity of the Council of Ten, accentuated by the

¹ Romanin, vii. 178.

Foscarini tragedy, reached its climax six years later. The Ten had become a law unto themselves, and had usurped the power of disregarding the action of the Great Council and of overriding its decisions. Reniero Zeno, a descendant of the great Carlo, set himself the task of limiting the Ten to their legal sphere, and taking from them their unlawful authority. After a gallant, almost single-handed fight of four years against nearly the entire oligarchy, Zeno, on September 19, 1628, induced the Great Council to give to the Ten a new capitulary or set of regulations in which the Great Council asserted its sovereignty and forbade the Ten to revise its orders. Zeno is entitled to all credit for the courage and persistency with which he accomplished his object, but the results of his reform were short-lived. It was only a few years before the Ten had again usurped the same unconstitutional powers, which they continued to exercise until the end.¹

¹ Hazlitt, ii. 442 *et seq.*, discusses the Zeno incident at great length, and gives it possibly undue importance.

CHAPTER XVI

THE END

WAR with the Turks broke out again in 1644 and Candia was blockaded. The republic was almost bankrupt, and was even obliged to raise money by selling the office of procurator of San Marco for 20,000 ducats, and by ennobling seventy plebeian families on the payment of 100,000 ducats each.¹ France sent a handful of troops to the assistance of Venice, but they rather hampered than helped the cause of Christendom.² In 1669, after twenty-five years of heroic defense, Candia was surrendered to the Turks, and peace was concluded.

In 1685 war again broke out, and Francesco Morosini, the hero of Candia, was placed in supreme command. For the moment the fortunes of Venice revived, and like the afterglow of a gorgeous sunset, the deeds

¹ Romanin, vii. 372, and Garzoni, 92 *et seq.*

² Romanin, vii. 455.

of Morosini are as brilliant and as worthy to rank immortal as are those of the admirals of the heroic days of Venice. But Morosini's triumphs came too late. He recovered the Morea, and with it restored Venetian self-respect. When he died, however, matters went from bad to worse, and in 1718, by the Peace of Passarowitz, the republic was deprived of the Morea and of her interests in the Levant for all time to come.

During the last century of the republic's history, the best that can be said of her is that she existed. In 1769, just before the end, Angelo Emo, by his victories over the corsairs, showed that there were still men in Venice. But it was not that Venice ever lacked brave and valiant sons. It was the system that was at fault, and not the individuals. Her government was rotten to the core, and when at last it suited Napoleon's purpose to end it, Venice died without a struggle, unhonored and unmourned.

With the republic died the old Venetian spirit of nationality. The short-lived so-called republic of 1848 had for its ultimate object a united Italy rather than the restoration of Venice to her place among the

nations. It was called into being by the spirit of democracy which began to possess the continent at the close of the first half of the nineteenth century, and which was destined in time to revolutionize Europe. The Venetian revolt against Austria was directly opposed to the interests of the old order that had ceased to rule with the last of the doges. Like all the uprisings of the time in favor of popular liberty, it was conducted by the middle class,¹ who proved to the world that unselfish patriotism and heroic devotion to high ideals are not the exclusive possession of the aristocracy. Of the two leaders Pepe was a Neapolitan, and Daniele Manin was the son of an apostate Paduan Jew, who, according to the custom of the time, had selected, upon his conversion, a noble godfather.² Manin took his name from a brother of the last doge, and had no drop of noble, or, for that matter, Venetian blood in his veins.³

What there was of the aristocracy either remained aloof or left Venice. To them vas-

¹ Daniel Manin, par Henri Martin, Paris, 1859, 6.

² Venice the City of the Sea, Edmund Flagg, N. Y., 1850, i. 325.

³ Martin, 7.

salage to Austria was preferable to a democracy. To their shame be it said that almost all of the old families willingly accepted titles from Austria. The oligarchy conferred no titles of nobility, yet many descendants of the early rulers of the republic glory to-day in the possession of the lowest grade of nobility conferred by the Holy Roman Empire, purchased by the quiescent treason of their immediate ancestors to Venice. And herein lies the explanation of the decay and fall of Venice: her oligarchy was untrue to itself.

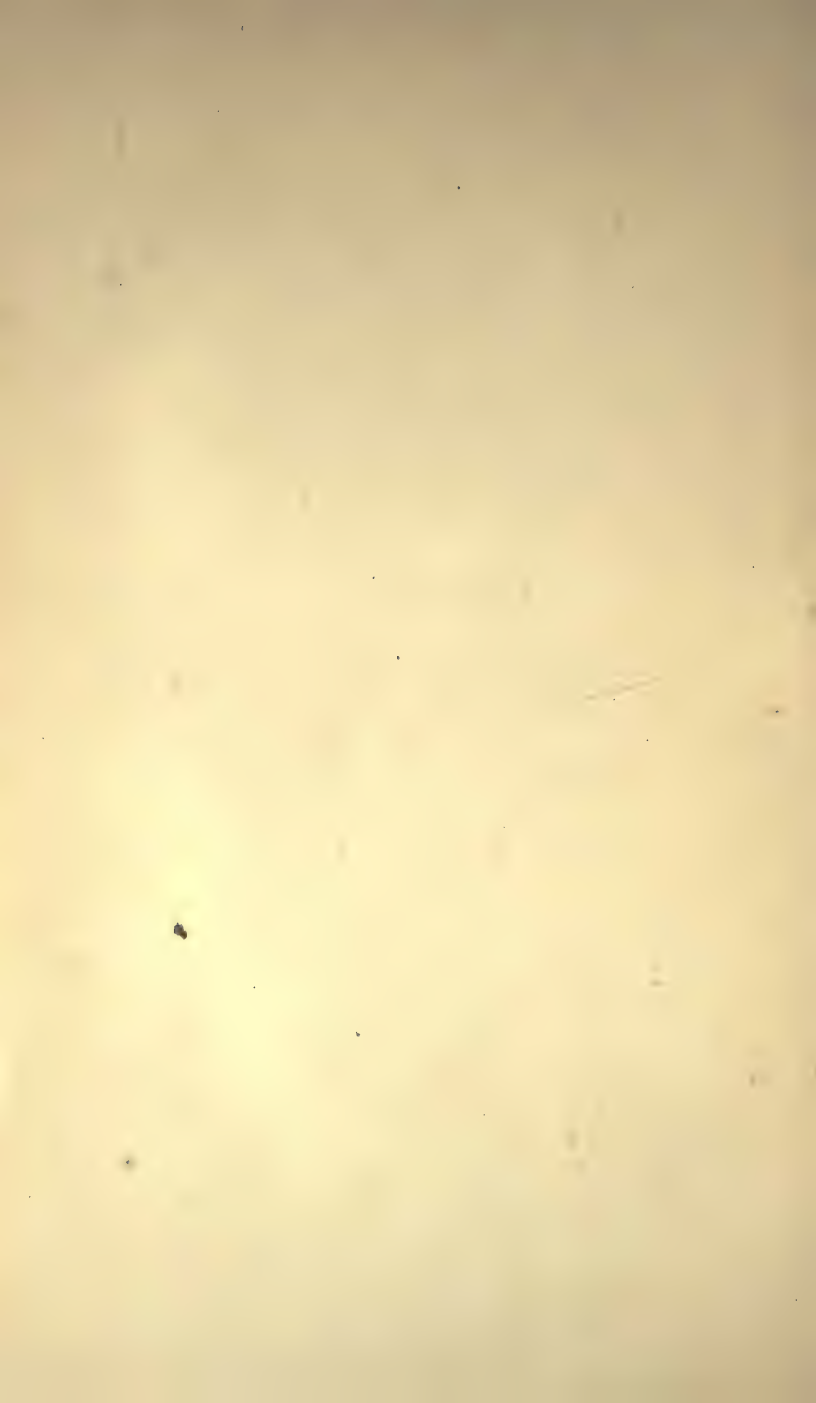
Because of her peculiar conditions, her evolution was the reverse of that of other countries in Europe. Endowed with popular institutions in the beginning, her aristocracy had early acquired the authority, which it enlarged and consolidated, so that the development of an all-powerful oligarchy was the natural result of her growth. The very strength of the nobility was its greatest danger, and class feeling and momentary class advantage asserted themselves to the detriment of national interests. Moreover, conditions arose which required prompt decisions and swift action, and, unhappily for Venice, the action taken was not always of the

wisest nor the decisions of the best. The sack of Constantinople and the resulting destruction of Genoa appeared, at the time, essential to the welfare of the republic. Perhaps they were, but they opened the way for the triumphant followers of the Prophet, and, by increasing the wealth of the aristocracy, led to that other fatal blunder, the closing of the Great Council.

When the ruling class lost responsibility to all but itself, class interest took the place of national welfare, and love of caste was substituted for love of country. Its members suffered from the mistake inevitable to oligarchies: they failed to realize that what was for the good of all was for the good of the few, and that without general content the tenure of a ruling class is at best precarious. Marino Falier, great reformer that he was, appreciated the shortcomings of his fellows, and tried to save them from themselves, but his life paid the forfeit of his temerity. The policy of expansion inaugurated by Francesco Foscari, with all its tinsel glitter, added to the evils of the state by inciting in the aristocracy a land-lust that could never be satisfied nor controlled.

As troubles crowded about the republic from without, suspicion and distrust ruled supreme within. Conscious of its weakness, the oligarchy sought to substitute diplomacy for force and a closer internal organization for that naval supremacy which was indispensable to her survival. But class union discouraged individual initiative, and the sacrifice of nationality for caste sapped the vigor of citizenship. When Venice needed virile force, she was only able to control cunning; when she needed men, she was obliged to place her reliance in diplomatists. As long as she was true to the real interests of the republic she prospered; when she was false to them she fell.

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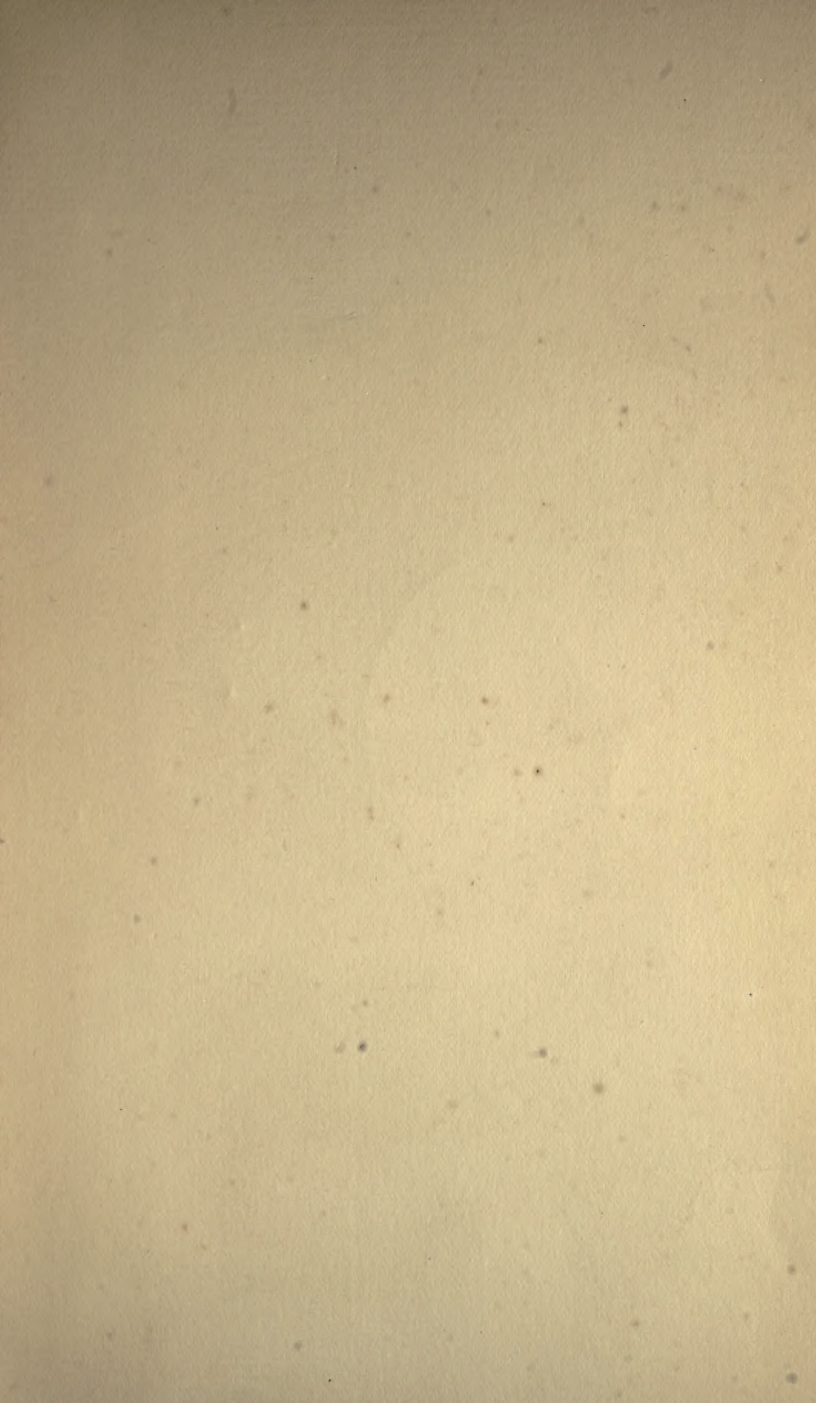
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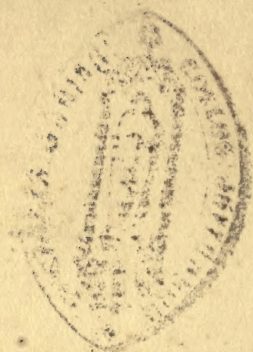


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